

AINSLEE'S

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVER FICTION

Vol. XII

SEPTEMBER, 1903

No. 2

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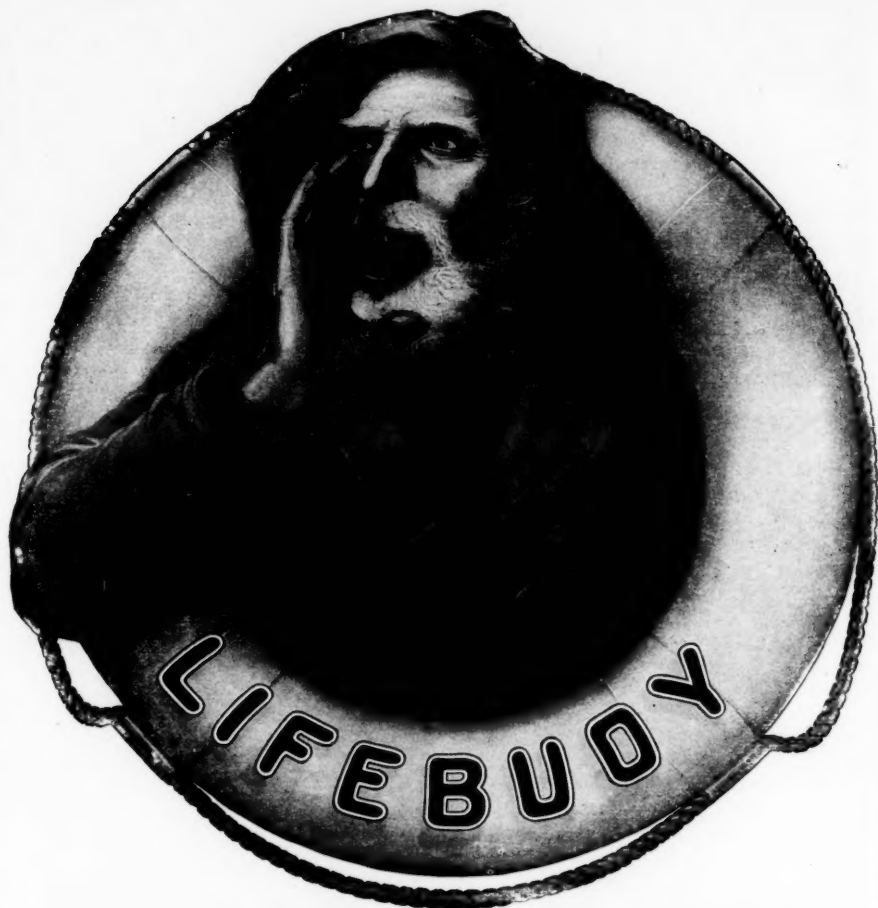
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Monthly Publication issued by AINSLEE MAGAZINE CO., 156 Fifth Avenue, New York.

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Entered September 11, 1902, at New York as Second-class Matter, under Act of Congress of March 2, 1879.



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THE BLUE MOON

By Lucia and Esther Chamberlain

CHAPTER I.

THE hands of the cuckoo clock on the colonial mantle were quivering on the stroke of nine as Mrs. Cowden Clark arose from the breakfast table.

She was its only occupant at the moment, though the place opposite showed a disarray indicating a recent departure, and two neatly laid plates on either side suggested tardy arrivals.

At the first stroke of the clock, and simultaneously with the appearance of the cuckoo in its little gilt door, the dining-room door opened, and a girl came in with a flurry, nearly colliding with the lady who was going out.

"Oh—I beg your pardon, aunt!"

"Good-morning, Sara," said Mrs. Cowden Clark. Over the high collar of her well-set blouse she surveyed her niece's white lawn *negligée* and cerise ribbons with disapproval. Then she looked at the clock.

"Is Anne ill?" she inquired, with well modulated anxiety.

"Oh, dear, no" — apologetically — "she's coming right away."

"Ring for Molly when you want your coffee. I trust it is still warm," said her aunt, as she passed out, her invisible taffeta whistling, and the *Newton Times* rustling under her arm.

The muslin ruffles and cerise ribbons settled into a chair with a flutter that was almost a flounce. Sara Hill was a much furbelowed young person. Her bright brown hair had the effect of being put up in a successful whirl. Every escaping lock curled impishly. The smooth contour of her cheeks was ruf-

fled with dimples. They gave too much simplicity—a fascinating air of elaboration.

"Dear, dear, I wish aunt did not make me feel so like a pickpocket," she murmured, shifting her impatient glance from the severe rectangular aspect of the dining-room to the sweep of leaves against the window, and the glint of the Hudson under the Palisades. "Where is Anne?"

The opening door was her answer.

"I thought you were never coming. Aunt has been asking after your health."

Anne glanced at the clock. Sara's eyes involuntarily followed her sister's.

"I suppose we ought to have gotten up," she said. "But why must she rub it in so?"

"Why should she have breakfast at such an unchristian hour?" said Anne, yawning, and sitting down. Her manner lacked the flurry of Sara's. She moved with a repose that did not necessarily mean serenity. "We were late last night, and Molly hasn't an earthly thing to do but clear the table and dust the sideboard. Here's the coffee. Stop frowning, Sally. Let's hope it's hot." She tested it gingerly.

"Br-r-r-r!" she murmured, "warm!"

"That's just it!" said Sally, fiercely, "warm coffee! It is the epitome of this lukewarm existence! Look at last night. Could anything have been worse! Boat-club dance — circus lemonade — boys from twenty down—chaperons in a dado along the wall—dressing-room conversation afterward!"

"Sweet time?"

"Oh, glorious! Had my card full!"

Anne rested a cleft chin on a closed fist with a nonchalant disregard for the rectangular that Mrs. Cowden Clark would have deplored. Her long, gray eyes were fixed absently on the red bow in the hollow of Sally's left shoulder.

"It wasn't stupid, Sally, that party. It was only stupid for us. Age is creeping upon us, Sara Hill—the singular baldness of young middle-age."

Sally's wide eyes opened yet wider.

"You're only twenty-eight," she said.

"Well," replied Anne, "I can remember when I thought that age valid excuse for a fib."

"Oh," said Sally, crossly, "if you feel like that, let's take the frillies off our petticoats, and go with aunt to the Presbyterian guild meeting this afternoon. You can only be one of two things in Newton, young and vapid, or full of years and scandal."

"That's not the sort of old age I mean. I'm talking about the old age of youth, which is quite another thing. But the people here don't know it when they see it. You are a girl until you are twenty-five. After that—I had a new sidelight on myself last evening. It was Mrs. Mowbray. 'Dear Anne Hill. What a pretty girl she was. It's astonishing she has not married, for I know Clarence Lewis was very much attracted by her at one time.' There you have me; simply a likely aspirant in the matrimonial game who has somehow fumbled a good catch."

Puckers of distress wreathed the brow of the adaptable Sally.

"Oh," she wailed, "why didn't we stay in Chicago?"

"Because we were girls, and there was no one to take care of us when papa——"

Anne walked to the window. For a few minutes she stood silent, her fingers drumming on the pane.

"Do you know," she said, at last, "I can't, even now, bear to read the score of his last opera. Do you remember how we sang the duets together so that he could see how they went?"

"And Rob Grayson," broke in Sally, "how he used to come in and sprawl on the divan, and sketch you while you

sang, and do *Romeo and Juliet* with the long piano bench for the balcony, and a piece of chewing gum? I wonder where he's playing now!"

"And Mrs. Owen-Tabert," continued Anne, her somber eyes lighting at the memory; "you remember her, Sally? how good she was to us when mother died?"

"I don't remember her then, much—I was too little; but I remember her Tuesday nights, and I remember she was the last we saw of dear old Chicago!" Sally answered, mournfully. "Oh, Anne, I'd be thankful to smell the tar in the long tunnel! I'd love to flock along the Lakeside Drive on a spring night! Anne, you make me homesick!"

"I meant to," said Anne.

"What's the use of making ourselves miserable? I can't stand it!"

"I know we can't," said Anne. "I knew it last night when the Mowbray passed sentence on us."

"But what can we do?"

"Have our own shack," said Anne, dropping lightly into the home vernacular.

Sally attempted a sneer.

"With an income that just permits our escape from arrest in the matter of clothes, as it is! How long do you think we could subsist in one room and a bath, with nothing to eat?"

"Sally, you have an idea the police will take you up if you are not silk lined. But I wasn't hoping to live on the interest. There is the principal——"

Sally quailed. "What will aunt say?"

Anne regarded her sister grimly.

"Sally, if you intend to follow in my footsteps, you will have to get ready to disregard everything that aunt is going to say for the next six months. What *can* she say? The money's ours. Of course it's nice of her to have us here when she hates it so—no, Sally, I didn't say us, I said *it*—and keep a kindly interfering eye upon our clothes, our manners and customs, and prospects—whatever these may be!"

"Well, the principal—we'd lose it, or use it, and it wouldn't take long to do

either. Then we'd *have* to wear flannel petticoats, and go to the Presbyterian guild meetings."

"In that case we mustn't lose it," said Anne, firmly. "But in such an unforeseen contingency I want to remind you, Sally, that there are such things as suicide and matrimony."

It was this final word that Mrs. Cowden Clark heard as she opened the door. It appeared to her such an eminently proper word to be in the mouth of a mature young woman that it thawed almost to a smile the look in which she included her nieces and the gilt clock. As she rang the bell with decision, and pulled down the dining-room shades, she observed—Mrs. Clark observed where others exclaimed—that she was unable to understand how people could spend an hour over a cup of coffee and half a muffin. She added that she hoped Anne had not forgotten that the cooking class met that morning, and Sara that she had an engagement at the dentist's at eleven. Later, she said, if Anne still considered it necessary to do that shopping, she could meet them at Ackerman's for luncheon.

Anne followed discreetly in the wake of Sally's tempestuous petticoats. The thought of the cooking class, to which she had given unremitting attention for two years, added fuel to the fire of her resolve.

The faint, bracing chill of mid-autumn, the crisp, drifting leaves, the red Virginia creeper that enlivened the eminently suitable architecture down Wallingford Avenue, were all a fillip to her rebel mood. It irritated her that anything so beautiful should be so dead, but she no longer felt it poignantly personal. From a corner of the Wallingford Avenue car she noted the three underfed shopgirls, the overfed old gentleman in the corner, the angular set of Mrs. Mowbray's perennial bonnet above her sables with a feeling of farewell.

As she passed through the side entrance of the Woman's Institute into the large, bare room that served at different times the purposes of classroom, concert or lecture hall, she was conscious that this total absence of regret was in-

decent, not to say premature. Her only assets at the moment were a potential principal, and a vast discontent.

The cooking class was already in progress. Anne found herself watching with a fresh interest, a curious sympathy, the deft-fingered expositor. At other times she had felt that this woman, whose intense face might mean determination or despair, was nearer her kin in thought and need than the unresponsive class. Now Anne found in her a vague suggestion toward an unformed future, a stepping-stone, as it were, out of Newton into what she wanted—activity. Activity was what Newton lacked. Its very charities were cut and dried—its interests were passive.

The subject of the morning's lecture, that was to the lecturer a vital and absorbing matter, as well as a means of livelihood, was to Newton hardly a pastime, certainly not an interest. A duty possibly, if a duty it is to get through the time appropriately.

Was it true, she wondered, resentfully, as the express whirled her southward, that the very existence of the world's moving half was to the other half at best an amusement, at worst a deplorable lack of repose? It was with a feeling of escape from stagnation that she stepped out into the smoky roar of the Grand Central—its cross currents of meeting and parting—of comings and goings to the ends of the earth—a whirlpool of arrival and departure. As the Madison Avenue car carried her swiftly toward the city's heart, its stupendous energy laid hold of her. The vast murmur, the clanging cries, the pitiless self-interest at once appalled and stimulated her. It was not the pageantry of the streets, but the faces of the men and women into which she looked, wondering what they did, and how they sped in the great wheel of humanity here in motion. So absorbed was she that she was even oblivious of the long blockade. When she plunged through the shopping tide at Fifteenth Street for the wide steps of Ackerman's, she was full fifteen minutes after the appointed hour.

When she stepped from the elevator on the top floor, the first person she dis-

tinguished was Mrs. Cowden Clark, consulting her watch.

"Why will aunt insist on lunching in a department store?" Anne thought, as she threaded her way through the midst of the warm clatter, threatened with trays whirled by at perilous speed, and jostled by hasty waitresses.

"When you make appointments for your own convenience, Anne," observed Mrs. Cowden Clark, "it would be well to keep them promptly. We have been waiting half an hour."

"I'm dreadfully sorry, aunt. You shouldn't have waited a minute."

"Don't imagine we have been waiting all this time for you, Anne," announced Sally. "It's the order. As aunt says, for about half an hour."

"Just fifteen minutes," replied Mrs. Clark, with aggravating placidity. The aftermath of a disagreement was in the atmosphere. Sally was flushed and fiercely silent. Mrs. Clark, calm and crimson, promptly withered each conversational olive branch that Anne offered. Nor did their surroundings encourage cheerfulness. There was a hint of cottolene in the air, wafted from the buffet, but in spite of it they were unpleasantly conscious that the woman at the next table was fond of patchouli.

The appearance of their order enlivened the party. Mrs. Clark had ordered chops, and there arrived breaded veal cutlet. An altercation followed upon how the waiter could have mistaken "chops" for "breaded veal cutlet," and how Mrs. Clark could have said "breaded veal cutlet" when she meant "chops"; during which Sally and Anne ate olives in discreet silence. They lunched upon breaded veal cutlet with a sauce piquant of "why on earth *does* Ackerman employ such impudent people?" and "Sara, put your hat straight."

"Never mind, aunt," said Anne, drawing on her gloves, "some day a restaurant will be conceived where you can shout your order down a speaking-tube, and every waiter shall have an ear trumpet. Sally, are you coming with me? You'd better let me help you pick out those things you were going to get."

"I trust," said their aunt, "that you will not forget to purchase your winter flannels." Sally shivered. Anne seized her sister's elbow, and hurried her streetward.

"What an atmosphere," she said, as she pushed open the swinging door.

"Don't speak to me, or I shall scream," replied the younger Miss Hill, seizing the tail of her gown in one hand and her wayward hat with the other, as they breasted the brisk breeze that stirred down Broadway. "What do you have to get, Anne?"

"I don't know—oh, a cab to begin with," replied her sister, absently.

"There's a hansom," cried Sally. "Quick!"

"McCreery's," Anne called through the peephole, as the doors slammed them in. She sank back with a sigh of relief. Sally, in the first flush of her wrath, failed to note her preoccupied frown.

"I won't stand it another minute!" burst forth the younger Miss Hill, with a tempestuous bounce on the cushions. "I'll leave without a week's notice! The dentist? I'd forgotten him! I've been with aunt to the tailor's since. She said *such* nasty things about the coat! She didn't want it to fit!"

"But it does!" said Anne.

"Of course it does, but my taste is common, and my name is mud. Anne, does your present expression anticipate purchasing flannels?"

"No-o; but listen!" Anne turned a suddenly animated face. "I've just had an idea!"

"For escaping aunt and the fourthirty to Newton?"

"For escaping Newton permanently. Sally, a few more such luncheons will cause my premature death."

"Indigestion?"

"No—gastritis. I wouldn't be so vulgar as to die of indigestion. The viands were cold, the temperature was roasting—the service detestable. The floor-walker and the furniture varnish took away my appetite." Anne paused for breath.

"Of course it was vile," Sally admit-

ted; "but, short of Sherry's, you can't do much better."

"Can't I?" said Anne. "I've seen it done this morning by a woman no better than I."

"I don't see how that helps us any, unless you intend to stay at home and cook your own luncheon."

"I think," said Anne, "that it would be far more entertaining to go away from home, and cook some one else's."

"Marriage?" said Sally, cynically.

Anne did not immediately reply. Their hansom was jammed in the blockade at Broadway and Eighteenth Street. She was watching the coal carts, drays and broughams disentangling themselves—the people dodging madly under the noses of the horses, in front of autos and cars, to sift again into the restless tide that poured ceaselessly down from Madison Square and Twenty-third Street, and up from Union Square, disappearing in and reappearing from the shops, like rabbits in and out of warrens. She felt the swarming streets, the clangor of many bells and gongs, the breeze that drove the dust, and took the hats, and whirled the skirts, alike inspiring and exhilarating.

"Anne, do come back from the honeymoon," urged Sally.

"We will cook," said Anne, dreamily, her eyes on the horse's ears. "We will cook the luncheons of the herd."

"We? If you intend going out to service, Anne Hill, you needn't include me. At least, I would prefer to be second maid."

Anne squared her shoulders, and lifted her head.

"Really, Sally, I'm *serious*! Can you think of one restaurant in New York where people who haven't heaps of money—people like us—can go and be served decently? Did you ever go into any one of them without thinking how much better it might be? If it's large, it's ostentatious and lonesome; and if it's small, it's stuffy! And you always wait longer than you eat."

Sally stared at her sister with wild incredulity.

"Anne Hill, how dare you think of such a thing!"

"I don't see why not," said Anne, defiantly. "I don't see the difference between that and opening a milliner's shop, or a playhouse."

"But we don't know one thing about it," Sally objected, faintly. "We would lose everything in a minute."

"We could learn," said Anne. "We've got to do something, and I would rather invest my own money, and at least have the fun of losing it. Besides, I don't think we'd lose it. Success depends on doing awfully well something that no one else is doing. Unless we are idiots we can't fail. Look at the people who succeed with bonnet shops! Now, only half the world wears bonnets, but everybody has to eat."

"I have heard," remarked Sally, darkly, "of enterprising females who started 'ladies' lunches' that were heard of once, and no more forever."

"If you think my idea is a dairy with 'Ladies' Lunch' in white on the door, you are wrong. We couldn't hope to compete with 'Mann's.' We will have a good restaurant, where people can get milk or champagne, as they like; where shoppers can lunch, or smart people give formal dinners, if they want to. It's an anomaly, I admit—from which it derives its name. Its name," Anne continued, looking dreamily across the surge of Fifth Avenue and Twenty-third Street, "its name is the 'Blue Moon.'"

CHAPTER II.

"I cannot tell you, Anne, when anything has grieved me more deeply than this undignified whim! If your poor father were alive——" Mrs. Clark paused, portentously. Anne bit her lip.

"Father always liked us to be independent," said Sally, goaded beyond her determination for silence.

"I feel sure," replied Mrs. Cowden Clark, transfixing her niece with a look, "that it never occurred to him that his daughters could ever conceive of obtaining it by engaging in trade! And such a trade! It is not like a work one could take home, and do in one's family."

Sally stifled a giggle. The idea of taking a restaurant home with one night was too much for her. Mr. Clark rubbed his bald spot. He was trying to enjoy the "Golfer's Guide" in the recess behind the tall lamp, but the conversation was too strenuous to be ignored.

"Oh, oh, Maria, I wouldn't," he murmured. "Girls, they like a change."

"It would be the sort of change, Cowden," replied his wife, removing her severe regard from Sally to her husband, "that is likely to prove permanent. One cannot step up into one's social position again with the celerity with which one steps down. Your tendency to these vulgarizing interests, Anne, I have always regretted, and I think upon experiment you would find the concomitant lack of refinement trying. It would, however, prove a costly experiment, as no lady can engage in business and meet the world on that ground without losing much of her womanliness, and becoming less fine."

"Nevertheless, it is an experiment we are about to try," replied Anne, quietly.

Mrs. Clark, who had been pursuing a theoretical dissertation on an abstract subject, an occupation she especially enjoyed, sat up and forsook her lorgnon.

"I trust," she said, "if your indiscretion carries you so far, you will not drag your young sister into such an, er—uncertain existence as you entertain for yourself."

Anne did not dare to catch her "young sister's" eye. Sally sat very erect, and prim, as though the stiffness of the spidery chair on which she perched had communicated itself to her. The drawing-room always affected her thus. Cowden Clark rubbed his bald spot. It was a gesture indicative of a disturbed mind. He was a peace-loving man.

"Sally and I have been talking it over for a week," Anne replied. "I think we realize some of the disadvantages; and though not the life we would choose, supposing we had a choice, I think we are better fitted for it than for this."

"Better fitted for it than for this! A Hill fitted for trade!" Mrs. Clark's voice arose with her rising indignation.

"You forget, aunt, we are not all Hill," said Sally, with spirit.

Severity darkened Mrs. Clark's brow. The vivid, childlike woman whom her brother had married, from the very doors of the greenroom, was a fact she had always sought to overlook; and in contemplating her nieces, had, by an unconscious mental process, conceived of their origin as that of Minerva, sprung full armed into life, all Hill, and untainted. It seemed to the good lady as though in return for her past disregard the taint was wreaking revenge threefold.

"Without doubt that accounts for everything," she replied, acidly. "Your poor father was foolish, perhaps, in the choice of a—"

"Profession?" Anne suggested, politely. Her long, gray eyes blackened.

"Yes, if you call it that. It was at least a gentleman's profession. Now, once for all, Anne, I wish you to understand that the Hill name is mine as well as yours. If you do not care where you carry it, I do! Think what will be said! What *will* Cousin Grace say! Consider the bishop!"

Anne, who was used to her aunt's unfurling of the banner of her ecclesiastical uncle as a sort of umbrella in times of storm, remained unmoved.

"Pshaw, aunt," said Sally, crossly—scenes were her abomination—"once get our uncle, the bishop, inside our shop and well fed, he'll love it! You'll see!"

The idea of a bishop feeding appealed to Mrs. Clark as vulgar, though she had had ocular proof at her own table that this was his method of sustenance. She thrust it aside as irrelevant.

"My position in this matter," she said, "is most painful. It may seem now a triviality to you, my child, but when you see your own name, and your father's name, on a sign, on a public street, over a place with pie in the window—"

Her emotions mastered her words.

"I didn't mean to hurt you; but, aunt, dear, you don't understand! That is not the sort of place we are going to make."

"The 'sort of place' makes no difference. It is the idea of any such place.

You have never, my child, fully realized your family traditions."

"But," said Anne, "if you wish it, our name need not appear at all."

"Of course we are not going to take in the cash, or patrol the dining-room," said Sally.

Mrs. Clark quailed at the word. "I fear concealment will prove impractical," she said.

"It must *not* be," Anne replied, with that air of bending natural law to her will that was her father's legacy. "Why should it? If the people we employ know that it is worth their places to keep still, they will. And we will tell no one." Anne paused.

"Of course I dislike deception," Mrs. Clark began, "still——"

"This is merely secrecy," said Anne.

"But there will be many inquiries as to what you propose to do!"

Anne smiled. "Of course, inquiries will be legion. You can tell them we are decorating china," she said, "and that will not be untruthful, either. We shall decorate it in the only proper and inviting way possible."

"Nevertheless, it may prove embarrassing to be continually asked about your work, and Miss Rossiter, as you know, is quite interested in china painting."

"We can tell them once for all exactly what we are doing. They can't continually inquire of us when we are not here!"

"Not here?"

"Why, we shall take rooms in New York, of course."

"I see no 'of course' about it," Mrs. Clark announced, adjusting her lorgnon.

"But, aunt, while the restaurant is starting we will have to be there early and late; and always within call."

"Are you really contemplating, Anne, residing in rooms, alone in New York—you and Sara?"

"My dear aunt, you are forgetting five years. Isn't a seasoned spinster of twenty-eight supposed to be capable of properly conducting herself and her affairs?"

Mrs. Clark arose. "In that case," she said, "I wonder you have considered it

necessary to consult me at all in the matter."

She swept from the field of triumphant defeat with the air of abandoning a burning Moscow. In the week following, she permeated the house with a fine atmosphere of suffering indifference, in which her nieces and her husband found it difficult to breathe.

Sally and Anne pursued their preparations for departure to an accompaniment, the theme of which was that when time had taught them they might always find a refuge under her roof. This invitation was all the co-operation they could hope for from the suffering Mrs. Cowden Clark—*née* Hill. They found themselves obliged to face alone the adjustment of their finances.

Of their inheritance, a part was invested in real estate, and rendered unavailable by a clause in their father's will, which provided that it remain intact until the first marriage. The rest, amounting to ten thousand dollars, was invested in a steady stock, and it was upon this slender substance that Sally and Anne expected the Blue Moon to rise, and wax. The stock Anne sold, and banked the proceeds, assisted in the transaction by what Mrs. Clark considered the criminal connivance of their lawyer. The proposed place of residence was a matter of equal dudgeon to the poor lady, since any residence in New York was, for unmarried women, nefarious. So, after climbing unnumbered flights of stairs, and looking unmoved upon steam-heated cages, they fell into the snare of a square, low-ceilinged studio, with broad-silled windows, and fascinating grass *portières* left in lieu of rent by the former tenant.

It seemed to Anne, as she took an inventory of their belongings, with regard to freighting, that the lot would but sparsely furnish their new abode; but Sally dauntlessly declared that their trunks would fill in the chinks, and that after the close atmosphere of Newton one could not have too much room.

In spite of their eagerness, the moment of their departure was far from cheerful. Sally was guilty of several sniffs, Anne of more than one qualm of

conscience. Mrs. Cowden Clark, watching the four-wheeler rolling down the street, Sally waving from the window, and Anne's suit case teetering on top, furtively wiped away a tear.

"In a cab, of course," she murmured. "How like their poor father!"

CHAPTER III.

Anne laid down the latest communication from "Innit and Seam," with a breath that was almost a sigh. The real estate agents were unsatisfactory again. The clutter of letters on the scratched mahogany table—loot from a second-hand shop—displayed a laudable desire to please, linked with a total failure to comprehend her requirements, that was discouraging in the extreme. Even the glowing grate, the well-rugged divans, and her own folding bookcase, now expanded, and hung between the windows from whose broad sills Sally's ferns looked resignedly out on a prospect of back yards and chimneys—even these, though they soothed her gloomy mood, could not beguile her from the thought that the Blue Moon was no nearer realization than it had been a fortnight before.

At the outset, the finding of a proper place had seemed a small matter, but the two weeks had passed in fruitless correspondence and hopeful expeditions that ended in disgust and disappointment. It seemed in all this city, that had offered and promised such a variety of what they wished, an attractive basement with anything approaching a modest rent, was not to be found.

Sally came in in a stir of crisp petticoats. She brought with her the keen buoyancy of the outside, and the good temper that follows a good breakfast.

"What's that?" said Anne, as her sister plumped a fat volume down on the table.

"'Steward's Complete Guide,' and 'Directory of the Waiter's Guild,'" replied Sally.

"What good are these to us without a place to hang our sign? Listen to this."

She read from the letter in her hand: "Large, light loft—fourth story of Knox Piano Building—elevator service!" She took up a second. "Three rooms and bath—up two flights—janitor on the premises!"

"Oh, is that all," said Sally. "I had hoped for something new. In that case I will go forth and explain once more to these well-meaning chuckleheads that a bath is not a necessary adjunct to a meal, and that most consider four flights too high a price for a luncheon."

"What is the use of wasting time?" said Anne, wearily. "We've got to find it some other way."

"Oh, you're blue this morning. Let them have another chance. Give me those addresses."

She disappeared into the cubby-hole that served for a dressing-room, and after an interval of rustling, and fragmentary singing, emerged, wonderfully transformed. Anne lifted her eyes languidly from the "Steward's Guide."

"That is very pretty," she commented, "but discretion suggests that a chiffon hat and my silk dust cloak are a trifle ostentatious for a business woman."

"Merely an excuse for a hansom," said Sally, blithely. "I know that the bathtub is a whited sepulcher, and the hot water a myth. I suspect the janitress burned your chocolate this morning; still, Anne, you needn't be a beast." With a sisterly regard she gathered the folds of Anne's cloak from the contaminating dust, and departed. The prickly interview had failed to puncture her buoyancy.

It was one of those high, clear, gray mornings that do not suggest rain. Sound, color, motion, were intensified in the steady atmosphere. There was an electric thrill in the air that could not be accounted for by the sluggish counter currents of carriages and the eddying crowd of pedestrians on Fifth Avenue. Or had the potential energy of the crowd charged the air like a huge battery?

The spirit of enterprise coursed in Sally's blood like a subtle hasheesh, making all things seem near and attainable.

She alighted at the dingy door of "Innit and Seam" with a certainty of success that amounted to accomplishment. In the front office a fat young man with a moist hand was very glad to see her. He knew they had a superfluity of exactly the sort of place she required. He called in Mr. Seam, with whom he consulted over large, clean books in unintelligible sentences. Then the fat man took a short list, and a greasy hat, and preceded Sally into the street.

For the next two hours he continued to precede her up narrow flights of stairs, and into dusty basements; through unsavory sequences of dingy rooms with white announcements of a defunct business on the blank windows; and stuffy parlors vacated by short-lived vegetarian lunch rooms, till Sally felt her conquering mood of the morning oozing from her, and was only sustained by the consciousness of her own splendor.

"I think," she said, as she stood in the middle of the stale saloon of a whilom *table d'hôte*, "I think we need look no farther. It's been very good of you," she added, remorsefully, "but they're not in the *least* what I want." The young man was sure they would have just the thing for her if she would call to-morrow. Sally returned hypocritical thanks, gave the home number, and climbed wearily into the hansom.

Broadway following on the heels of the West Side was an agreeable stimulant. She studied the shop fronts with the idea of possible proprietorship. "This gets to be a mania," she thought, as she caught herself leaning forward to inspect the buildings of the quiet cross street into which they had turned. But she had hardly settled herself in a position of determined remorse, when her eye fell upon a wide doorway under an ample portico, and a deep windowglass pasted with the words "to let."

A distinguished building is as conspicuous as a distinguished woman; and these neglected premises had an air of potential elegance. Sally looked, hesitated—pressed the electric button three times.

In her brief but thorough experience

she had learned that janitors are difficult to find on their own premises. She rang four times, and attracted the furtive attention of a policeman on the opposite side of the street before the door was opened by a small, tight man with a darting eye. He was quicker in his movements, and lighter on his feet than any janitor she had yet seen, and seemed a very fitting adjunct to such a superior building.

"I wish to inspect these apartments," said Sally, stepping into the vacant shop. The janitor looked her curiously up and down; looked at the cab at the door; looked at the policeman across the street.

"Have you a permit, madam?" he said, with an almost imperceptible hesitation.

"Oh, is that necessary?" said Sally, with slight hauteur.

"It is one of the rules, madam."

"But can't you just show me through? I should like to see the other rooms on this floor."

The man fidgeted. "I'm sorry—but it's impossible."

She looked about the square, light room that fulfilled the promise of the attractive doorway; looked at the wood paneling, the hardwood floor, the swing door in the left wall. It was all so attractive—so just what she wanted!

"Surely," she began, "you can tell me whether there are any rooms—" Something like a flutter in the back wall snapped the sentence in the middle. If she could have believed her eyes she would have thought that a small patch of wall, about five feet from the floor, had stirred. For an instant she was incapable of motion. Then she turned. She saw the janitor at the window, holding up a finger. What for? To call her cab? She saw the policeman run across the street—saw, with a feeling of nightmare, the two men in the door. A demand for the reason of these extraordinary actions trembled on her tongue, but something in the faces fronting her made her turn to the door behind her with the instinct of the hunted. It opened inward, almost upon her, to admit a third man. At the instant she felt

herself hemmed in. Horrible newspaper stories of abduction, sandbagging, societies for murder, raced through her head. She made no difference between the three men till the latest arrival spoke. There was a sense of rescue in the sound of his voice; there was an authority in his very movement that commanded the situation.

What he said was: "Hello, Lillie, been expecting you; come out and have some lunch." He made a step toward the policeman, turned his head with a rapid facial contortion that was at once a warning and a promise.

"It's all right, boys," he said, "I've been expecting this lady. She isn't quite onto my game yet—expected to find me sitting in my shop." His hand was in his pocket at the beginning of this sentence, but as he ended he took it out, and appeared to shake hands simultaneously with the two men, a proceeding that seemed to please them. Then he looked at Sally, and held the door open for her to pass out. She felt the suspicious eyes of the policeman and the janitor on her back. She moved in a daze. Some one handed her into the hansom, she heard a swift, commanding voice say "Shanley's" to the cabby, and found herself driving rapidly up Broadway with an absolute stranger. As she looked at him, a return of panic obliterated her instinctive trust. She saw him as a unit of the city's well-clad, unreliable population. Such was the breadth of his shoulders, that, to her startled eyes, they filled all the available space in the cab. She shrank as far away as space allowed.

"Don't be alarmed," he said—that voice again, with its unreasonably adequate assurance. It had dropped the former tone of easy familiarity. "I had to come to fool them—to get you away. I'm going to get out at the next corner. Hello, what's wrong?" The last was addressed to the world in general. The hansom, which had been zig-zagging its devious way through an accumulating crowd of vehicles, had stopped. A furniture van blocked the way. On one side the populous windows of a Broadway car, on the other a Macy delivery

wagon hemmed them in. Sara laughed hysterically.

"Thank you," she said, "but you can't—not just this minute." She looked him squarely in the face for the first time, and was embarrassed to find him looking at her. She glanced quickly away again, but carried with her the impression of unwavering blue eyes and a square, thrusting chin.

"It—it was very good of you to take me out of there," she said, weakly. "I don't quite know *what* you took me out of. I don't quite know what I did. I was only looking for a shop—and he wouldn't let me see it. I suppose you'd rented it."

Her companion looked a little blank. "Oh—er—yes, I'd rented it," he admitted with tardy eagerness and a strangled smile.

"And I wanted it so," she ran on nervously, feeling that somewhere an explanation was due.

"But that's a store, you know; you'd hardly want that." He looked down sidelong at all the piquant profile a swirl of chiffon left visible—a flushed cheek, and a quivering chin. For the first time in his twenty-nine years he endured a blockade with an equanimity that looked like content.

"But a shop is what I *do* want—a restaurant, that is—I mean a place to have one—to eat in, you know."

He looked blank, then disappointed—then brightened.

"Then let's go to Shanley's," he said, with a relaxation of manner barely perceptible.

It was Sally's turn to look blank. Then she stiffened.

"You have the advantage of me. I am not hungry," she said, frostily.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, I misunderstood you. You said you were hungry—at least you said you wanted a place to eat in——" the sentence hung suspended in sheer bewilderment. They looked at each other.

Sally felt herself blundering through a maze of mysterious cause and result that she could not unravel. She wondered if she was going mad. The overwhelming impulse to rescue herself

from this mental quicksand in which she was floundering drove involuntary words to her lips.

"If you will tell me what was the matter with the janitor and the policeman, and why you are here, and what it all means, anyhow, I'll know what to say to you."

He hesitated, looked hard at the clear innocence of the brown eyes under the modish hat, the fine line of lip and throat above the extravagant cloak, the high-held head.

"The place," he said, slowly, "is an unlicensed poolroom that stands in with the police; the sign 'to-let' is a blind; your janitor is the lookout. They took you for a female detective. That officer would have taken you up on—er—a trumped-up charge. I had to get you out on a bluff."

The procession of events was over-coming Sally.

"But," she stammered, "how did you know that I was—I mean that I wasn't—"

"I had the situation sized up before I came in. I couldn't make a mistake about you," he answered, with a directness that robbed the words of personal significance.

"But you did—you just have," said Sally, accusingly.

"I didn't understand—I don't have to."

"Oh," she said. The mystery was lightening. "Oh," she said again, and began to laugh deliciously. "You thought—oh, how could you! Now you *must* let me explain. I was looking for a restaurant when I went into that place. I want to rent one—to run one of my own, I mean."

He gaped at her.

"You want to run a restaurant! *You!*" he ejaculated, in mingled incredulity and admiration.

"Yes. And the real estate men were so stupid. They've been showing us lots of things that wouldn't do at all, for weeks. So I just thought I'd look myself."

The temerity of this delightful baby had him by the throat, and he heard the

word "us" with an unreasoning sense of panic.

"Us?" he repeated, vaguely. "Us?"

"Yes, Anne—I mean my sister."

"Ah," he experienced a sense of relief. "Did you like that place?" he inquired earnestly. "I'll get it for you—that is, I'll get you one like it."

"Shanley's," said the driver through the peep-hole in the hansom top.

"Why, why have we started?" said Sally, faintly. "How dreadful!"

"Yes, and arrived. Isn't it?" he replied. They smiled at each other in half embarrassment.

"I ought to get out," he said, "but if I do I can't tell you about that restaurant."

"If we could find a mutual acquaintance—" she hazarded.

"Oh, couldn't we begin in the middle—like a novel—and go back to the beginning afterward? I'll promise to find some one; but unless we can do without for a few minutes I can't tell you about that restaurant. I think I know just the place you are looking for."

"It would be very extraordinary; I don't at all approve of it—" She attempted severity, but dimples broke through. "Well, we may as well drive a little farther along, as we've come so far!" Then the cabby heard the order "Drive on!" from his entirely incomprehensible "fare."

Anne, wrestling through the "Steward's Guide" in the gloom of her dark blue mood, heard a mad race of light feet on the stair, and saw a flushed face bloom suddenly in the doorway. Sally came in with a skip.

"Well," said Anne, with a sudden expectancy. Sally's dimples were too obvious to be ignored.

"Well," said Sally, with a tantalizing pause. "Well," she cried, with an enthusiastic pirouette, "the Blue Moon is about to rise!"

"What do you mean? What are you talking about? For Heaven's sake stop whirling like a top and tell me!"

Sally paused, her hat rakishly over one ear, Anne's coat hanging by the armholes. She dived into her pocket,

and held dramatically, at arm's length, an oblong card which bore in unimpeachable script "Sedly White, Players' Club."

"But what's this got to do with the Blue Moon? What are you showing me this for? Did you pick it up on the street?"

"Yes, oh yes," chuckled Sally, "I picked it up on the street. Now, Anne Hill, unless you keep perfectly still, and stop thinking, until I've told you everything, you are going to be seriously shocked. When you feel like interrupting, just remember, on this account," she waved the card, "the Blue Moon is about to rise."

She threw Anne's coat on the divan, her hat on the table, her gloves after it.

"The first thing I did," she said, from over the back of the Morris chair, her chin on her folded arms, "was to look at such a number of perfectly odious places, and get so tired that I had to come home. But I didn't. I started; but coming through from Broadway I saw such a dear basement place—the first decent one I'd seen, I had to stop. It had a sign 'to-let' on the window, so, of course, I thought it was all right. I rang up the janitor. He was a long time coming—they always are. And when he came he didn't want to show me the place. Said he couldn't without a permit, and such stuff as that, so of course I wanted to see it all the more. I asked him how many rooms there were in the back, and he began to fidget. Well"—Sally drew a long breath—her eyes widened. "Just as I was looking around the room and supposing I would have to go, the back wall opened a crack——"

"Sally!" cried Anne with a falling inflection.

"You promised you wouldn't! It was only for an instant but I was so scared I nearly died. And would you believe it, when I turned around an enormous policeman—oh, twice as big as he looked outside, was waiting to grab me. And then—a beautiful young man, with a square jaw, and the kindest voice, came out and pretended I was a friend of his—now hush! you mustn't

say a word—and he got me away in the hansom.

"So then he was very nice," Sally continued, racing along at top speed for fear of interruption, "and said he'd get out at the next corner—only he couldn't, because the furniture van was in the way. So after some misunderstanding," she gave a reminiscent flush, "he explained it all. And only think, Anne, it was an unlicensed poolroom I was trying to get into! I'd have been at the police station now if it hadn't been for him. So quite a while after that we had tea——"

"Sara Hill! Had tea with a perfect stranger that you met in a poolroom!"

"Oh, Anne, hush! I know this sort of thing only happens once in a hundred years, but this is the hundredth. It wasn't a bit what it sounds like! When I told him about the Blue Moon——"

"Sally, you didn't!"

"I had to—I mean I forgot not to, and he understands it's a secret—and he was perfectly interested!"

"I dare say," said Anne, dryly.

Sally bristled. "Anne, you sound exactly like Aunt Cowden; and you haven't even seen him! So after tea he took me to a stable right off Fifth Avenue—that is, it isn't exactly a stable now. It's been used by artists. If you don't stop laughing, I won't go on. And there's a half door, and leaded window glass, and beautiful rooms, all the rooms we need, except a kitchen."

"Bath and janitor?" inquired Anne.

"There's a bath," Sally reluctantly admitted, "but it's going to be taken out. Mr. White thinks the bathroom will make a good butler's pantry."

"Of course we could put in cooking arrangements," said Anne, "but honestly, Sally, your stable sounds more plausible than your man!"

"Wait till you see him," replied her sister. "Seeing's believing this time, anyhow."

"Do you mean," demanded Anne, with a disapproval distinctly Hill, "that I'm likely to see him?"

"You are—next Thursday, at tea. Oh, Anne, you're thinking him the wrong sort of person altogether. We

can't be nasty when he has been so nice. He's going to look up Uncle Cowden before he comes—he's in Wall Street, too, you see, and he says he's heard of uncle. Do wait till you've seen him before you pass sentence upon him."

Four discreet days later the unwavering eyes and pleasant voice of an immaculate person in a frock coat assailed Anne's suspicions over her five o'clock tea tray. Both she and the caller bore themselves with unremitting ceremony until the question of the Blue Moon loosened a somewhat strained and halting conversation. Subsequently Sally sat and watched them thaw to one another with carefully concealed satisfaction. Anne listened appreciatively to Sedly White's tactful business suggestions, but she found it difficult to arrive at any idea of the place from description—and the rough plan he sketched on an envelope was unsatisfactory, lacking proportion and color scheme. The best thing, Anne decided, was an appointment for the two to meet Mr. White the following morning at the place of the Blue Moon.

CHAPTER IV.

The Blue Moon was rising. On a side street, below Twenty-third, it stood conspicuous in the middle of a line of sedate and elderly houses, halfway between the magnificent surge of Fifth Avenue and the cheap bustle of its western neighbor. Having been a stable in the early years of its life, it had been set neither above nor below, but immediately on the sidewalk, and this gave it the abrupt air one sees in the Elizabethan houses—as though it had sprouted from the ground. From the street it showed a wide half door and a front that would have looked blank but for the two eye-like windows under the eaves that gave it a knowing, not to say waggish, expression. Sally insisted that it winked at her. Within, the improvements of the artists, who had made it "not exactly a stable," were apparent.

The room that one entered directly

from the street was square with a high ceiling. The diamond panes of the great, skylight window looking back were set with a milky blue glass that excluded the back yard view and filtered an opalescent light. To the right of this a flight of stairs, with a rectangular twist at the landing, led up to the attic. The place was excellent raw material, but a good deal of reconstruction would be necessary to transform a barn studio into a well-appointed restaurant. Anne, standing in the middle of the large front room, looked about her, all but oblivious of her two companions. Her first survey delighted her.

"The door must have a plate glass in the top," she murmured. "I'm glad the knob is copper. And a window could go there." She trailed her fingers the length of the north wall. She was wrapped in creative contemplation, her hand following unconsciously the direction of her thought.

"Now the kitchen?" she began, questioningly.

"In here," said Sedly White, opening a door for her to pass into a back room. "And here," he added, opening another, "is what I suggest would do for the butler's pantry."

"The ranges could go there, don't you think?" Anne was taking rapid eye measurements, "and the sinks along that side——" She peered into the proposed butler's pantry. "That tub will have to come out."

"It's a sin to take out that lovely tub," Sally declared, mindful of the whited sepulcher. "I'd like to take it home with us."

"The slide would come there," Anne went on, unhearing. "We will have to hang a swing door."

"The floor is lovely," said Sally, sliding joyously into the main *salon*. "Come upstairs, Anne. I shan't be happy until you've looked out through the eyes of the Blue Moon."

Sedly White's eyes followed her, departing, but he was on his knees taking distances in the kitchen for Anne, with a pocket measure. So absorbed did they become over connections for water

and gas pipes that Sally had to call them twice, craning over the banisters before they followed her aloft.

"The first thing necessary," said Anne, looking about the sun-streaked garret room, "is a master carpenter."

"May I make a suggestion, as one business man to another?" Sedly White inquired.

"You will find me an enthusiastic recipient of advice," replied Anne, poised a pencil above her notebook.

"She seldom takes it," interpolated Sally.

"The first thing you need," said Sedly, driving his hands into his pockets and including the room in a comprehensive glance, "is an ad."

"An ad?"

"Yes, advertisement. I don't mean a billposter," he added, noting Sally's horrified stare, "but a booklet—a little pamphlet nicely gotten out to distribute among the right sort—the sort of people you want to have here."

"Of course," said Anne, "we must advertise. I hadn't thought of that. But how would we set about it?"

"Oh, there are concerns that make a business of that from design to envelope. I know just the one."

"That's exactly what you said when you found the 'Blue Moon,'" said Sally.

"Well, you see I know little old New York pretty well in a business way, what she's got, and where. I think, Miss Hill, you'd better get out your booklet as soon as you can. We can see my man on our way across town if you like, and nail the carpenter at the same time. I know just the man."

Sally gurgled.

He looked apologetic.

"You must shut me off when you think I know too much," he said, anxiously.

Anne's laugh rang as merry as Sally's.

"So far we have found your knowledge much to our needs. I only hope you will shut us off when our questions get too numerous."

Sedly smiled, recognizing the significance of Anne's cleft chin.

"They won't," he said; "and the only

opinions I shall withhold are my ideas on interior decoration. They are about as fertile as a guinea pig's."

Two days later the united ideas of Anne and the advertiser, who was "just the one," evolved the scheme of the booklet that should sow abroad the name of the Blue Moon. Sally tied knots in her forehead long hours at the scratched mahogany table, inditing endless envelopes with names and addresses culled from her memory, their calling list, and the "blue book."

"It's worse than a wedding," she sighed, as she saw the last of the batch into the mail box. She and Anne were on their way to inspect the Blue Moon, now in the chaos of transformation; and Anne, as usual, had a series of wonderful ideas.

"Oak paneling halfway up," she explained, "and stenciling the rest—moons, you know, at every stage of wax and wane, hyacinth blue on oyster-shell gray."

Sally sighed with delight.

"And a fireplace."

"A fireplace in a restaurant!"

"Why not?"

"I never saw one," Sally began, dubiously.

"You never saw a blue moon, either. That's what we want. Something people have never seen before."

"You have lovely ideas, Anne. I don't see how you come by them, honestly! I never—What *are* you stopping at Tiffany's for?" as Anne turned into the narrow doorway on Fourth Avenue.

"Sign," said Anne, briefly.

"The sign! Here?"

"Why not? We must have it right."

"Anne Hill, you act like an heiress," Sally declared, following in her sister's wake. "I am only afraid our landlord will surprise you in your luxurious tastes, and raise the rent on us."

"Plunge, and the world plunges with you," Anne quoted blithely, having ordered a design the cost of which dismayed even her regardless spirit.

"Sneak, and you sneak alone," said Sally. "I have a suspicion, Anne, that we may sneak soon."

"That's better than creeping, or sitting still; but we are going to do something first."

Arrived at the Blue Moon, it seemed there was much to do first. The plumber had numberless reasons as to why the bathtub was not out of the butler's pantry when the shelves and closets were ready to go in; the glazier had inserted a square of ordinary, instead of plate glass, in the outside door, and the carpenters had heard double when Anne had directed a partition put up, upstairs. Four neat, box-like rooms met her outraged eyes. There followed a stormy season of uprooted labor, and muttered maledictions upon ladies who didn't say what they wanted in the first place, or know it when they saw it, to which the girls turned a deaf ear, and Anne, at least, a calm and determined front.

She prevented the slide from being out six feet from the floor; she rescued the kitchen cupboards from going up on the spot reserved for the ranges, and drew a chalk line for the partition between the upstairs dining rooms.

Simultaneous with the exit of the bathtub was the arrival of Sedly White with a designer, a friend of his, who, he had confided to Sally, "if you let him think he was let alone, was just the man to stencil the walls." Upon the infusion of masculine personality, calm fell on the fretted surface of events; murmurs subsided, work grew vigorous, orders were undisputed.

Anne and the stenciler spent an oblivious hour halfway up a stepladder, unfolding to one another their ideas. Sally, bossing severely, secure with the unwavering blue eyes to back her, oversaw the job of repartitioning the loft. In the intervals of supervision, the two looked out of the eye-like windows, and words unconsciously shaped themselves for personalities.

To Sally this alert, resourceful man who walked through obstacles with the same disregard with which he overleaped conventions, was an anomaly. She felt the vivid interest a new sensation kindles, when all is possible and nothing assured.

In Newton she had encountered two

varieties of masculine interest—that which inquired into her works in home missions, and that which squeezed her hand. This man brought back distant, crowding memories of the mutable crew that had gone in and out of her father's house in the West—their open-handed ease, their adaptable minds, their unexpected goals of ambition. But in place of their instability, he showed an iron will, a stiffness, a determination, not to be dodged. Wherever his hope was fixed, that she felt, would he attain, and the thought gave her the feeling of being near big machinery. It was merely heightened by the fact that he moved about her as if she were gauze to blow away at a careless breath.

His stories of what he regarded as casual events alternately amazed and amused her. He talked in the seven jargons of New York, and frequently had to translate himself. He met new circumstances with the resource of a man who lives by tremendous fluctuations and adjusts his mental process to the vagaries of the ticker. And yet, he handled her gloves as though they were flowers. And he played the races in unlicensed gambling houses!

It seemed incongruous that day after day this important person found odd hours to devote to the Blue Moon, but she caught herself wondering what they would have done without him. He laughed tremendously at her fears of bankruptcy, sided with Anne's extravagant orders, and talked about "going broke" as a casual daily occurrence.

"You have to risk money to get it," was the maxim on which he lived well.

Sally found her point of view unconsciously plunging as she grew easy to her new existence. It was an engrossing one. It set them to studying the "Steward's Guide," and led them into conversations with *chefs* whom Sedly White had introduced, as just the men to tell them. They grew wise in the matter of meats and vintages. They learned, to their horror, that the most profitable hour for plunder at the Washington Market was at five in the morning, when the country carts came in, and fish were carried up from the

wharves with the fresh, strong reek of the sea about them. They became entangled in the insidious undertow of leagues and unions, and waiters' rights. They found that a dish of hominy meant the labor of five people.

The Blue Moon itself never failed of episode. It did or did not assimilate its interior decorations harmoniously. It led them into futile extravagances. It presented choices between beguiling charms and common-sense arrangements that nearly broke their hearts; and threatened them with final defeat in the matter of service.

"Waiters we will *not* have!" said Anne. "They affect me like flies in an appetizing dish."

"Then what?" said Sally, blankly. "This is not a fairy tale. You will find 'little table appear' won't work."

"It sounds absurd, but I find myself wanting—"

"I'm not surprised. You generally are."

"That is to say, I *will* have a butler, and men in livery."

"Hyacinth blue and oyster-shell gray?" Sally inquired, wickedly.

"Any colors we like. We may as well be consistently outrageous, and it's no stranger than the fireplace and the settle."

Sally said nothing. Experience had taught her the necessary evil of cost.

"That means more advertising," said Anne.

Sally choked back a rising conviction that Sedly White would know just the man they wanted.

Their advertisement for an "experienced butler" conjured up processions of impossible persons of seedy references, whom it was difficult to conceive of as head waiters. So depressing was the effect of this anxious and inadequate aggregation that it seemed to them an interposition of Providence on their behalf when an uptown agency furnished them a pleasing nonentity with a comprehensive eye, and that colorless manner that stamps the genuine.

In his hands the pick of stupidity became competent automatons, and later, as the Blue Moon waxed, they came to

regard Wiggins' large salary as an apologetic tribute to his merits.

Through the last week of October, the final, lagging days of preparation each presented the plausible possibility of being the last. But it was a crisp November morning of winds and clear skies before the Blue Moon was open to alien feet.

"We are going, Sara Hill," said Anne, as they faced the brisk air stirring down Fifth Avenue, "we are going to eat breakfast for the first time in our own shop; and we are going to try to look as if we did not own it."

"I'm afraid to look at all," said Sally, as they turned the corner into the cross street. They saw their big, round lantern swinging in the wind, a great, smoky blue bubble. It seemed that every moment it must quit its wrought iron bar, and float up between the astonished houses. They saw the morning sky reflected in *their* plate glass door; they saw the violet pink of hydrangeas massed halfway up their diamond window panes. They stepped into a creation as fresh as Eden, and looked a trifle blankly at the mushroom groups of immaculate, empty tables. In their eager minds their anticipation of this morning had presented to them the Blue Moon teeming.

"Of course," said Anne, "of course!" choosing a round table near the window. "It's early—it's late—I mean people wouldn't be in to breakfast the first morning."

Sally looked lonesomely at the row of serving men, unhappily conscious of their dull blue livery. She felt that, had they worn any expression at all, it would have been one of amusement.

"Send them away," she said, "they make me nervous!"

"Sally, how ridiculous! You would only have to call them back when people begin to come."

"*Will* they come?" said Sally, and this thought gloomed through their study of the *menu*, through their desultory gayety, while they waited their own prompt service, and made each hat that passed the window above the hydrangeas that of a possible customer.

They loitered through their late breakfast. They ordered more coffee. They ordered grapes in cracked ice. The minute hand drew around to half-past eleven. They talked of other things. Anne was scribbling memoranda in her notebook for excuse to linger. Sally's eyes absently followed a pot hat that was making the usual journey along the tops of the hydrangeas. It stopped.

"He's looking in the window," she said, excitedly. "Oh, Anne, I do believe he's coming in."

Anne dropped her pencil. "Oh, Sally, I can't turn around!"

"He has," said Sally, "he has! He's fat, and bald, and I'm sure he's dull, but I love him! I wonder where he's going to sit."

He sat down heavily at the middle table, and looked around. He unfolded his napkin; he took out a crackling paper. He gave his order without looking at the bill of fare.

"I hate him," said Sally, "he's insulting."

"There are more," said Anne, with a carefully even voice.

They came in with a cackle that denoted their gender. They discussed the fireplace. The livery fascinated them. They walked around. They forgot what they had come for—and were imperceptibly reminded by the faultless Wiggins. They subsided at the indicated table, and exclaimed over the *menu*. The door opened on another presence.

Anne looked at her sister through a mist of tears.

"Oh, Sally," she said, "come home. I have to cry!"

CHAPTER V.

In the succeeding weeks it seemed to Sally and Anne that they ate, slept and lived "Blue Moon." In short, as Sally expressed it, they were "moon struck."

The new place drew customers in a fluctuating tide. The congested shopping of the holidays inundated it with an atmosphere of haste and fret and bundles. Its elegance was unregarded.

Its repose was jarred to bits. And behind the scenes they held command over an exasperating crew of underlings and tradesmen through the vigilance of Wiggins and the steward, their officious lieutenants. Their expenses were enormous, and from an irregular patronage their returns were uncertain. They saw their capital dwindling. A faint vertical line appeared between Anne's brows. Sally had days when she longed to apply a match and consume the competent and irritating Wiggins with the feeding herd that he depredated.

Under this double strain the inconveniences of the studio apartment became unendurable. They moved into a suite of upholstered boxes, the exact counterpart of twenty-nine others, in a snug, private hotel, with lift and telephone service.

"It's hideous, I know," said Anne, the morning after their move, "but it's adorably convenient, and heavenly clean. Your ferns make it endurable, and what do its looks matter when we never have time to look at it? Get your hat, Sally—you left it on the radiator—and let's go down to the Blue Moon for breakfast."

They had got into the habit of this, as it combined a necessary meal with a business engagement. And, beside, where else, they asked one another with excusable pride, could they find such a well prepared, well served meal among such harmonious surroundings?

"Wiggins' parting platitude last night," said Sally, reluctantly, "was that the head cook had given notice. I suspect he's implicated, but of course we can't find out."

Anne looked out over the gloomy prospect of tin roofs and laundry. "We've got to make a change," she said.

"Of course, if the cook insists."

Anne shook her head impatiently. "A change of policy, I mean. I think," she said, slowly, "as we go out, I'll ring up Sedly White and ask him to meet us at the shop for breakfast. We've not seen much of him lately—in a business way."

"Oh, Sedly would have just the right policy up his sleeve," said Sally, flipantly. Nevertheless, she listened to Anne's monologue at the telephone with a fear of disappointment, and a quite unreasonable elation at the outcome. Sedly would come—at once, as he had but twenty minutes to spare.

Five minutes later they found him in possession of their pet table by the fireplace, as it were, with a string tied to the cringing Wiggins, who rendered to this unmistakable clubman attention where attention was due.

"I've been taking liberties," he said.

"With Wiggins?" inquired Sally.

"Oh, oh, how did you dare!"

"With Wiggins. We had some words about the eggs."

"In that case," said Anne, transferring a white carnation from the vase on the table to the lapel of her coat, "it would be superfluous to ask who prevailed."

"Flattery," he began, dividing the eggs a-la-tripe into three portions, "makes me suspicious."

"You have cause," said Sally, buttering a muffin. "Anne never flatters except with the worst intentions. You may expect her to ask you what you think of the new electric moons. So try to bear up."

"And I shall have to tell her that my idea of light is a gilt chandelier with fifty-nine glass globes." But it was the question in his keen eyes rather than the light words that Anne answered.

"It's all wrong," she said, "and we don't know how to change it; that is, I have an idea, but I'm not sure. Oh, the shop's all right. It's *too* right for the people. Why, we might almost as well be running a place where they wipe off the wood for a clean tablecloth, and keep their cash girl in a cage. What is the use of having hyacinth moons where they never look any higher than their plates!"

Sedly White drummed the cloth with his fingers.

"Aren't you making money?" he asked.

"We are. But we're spending more, and you see we are not doing what we

set out to do. Six people out of ten come in here just because it's nearer than 'O'Flaherty's Patisserie,' and you see it's all wasted. My idea"—she hesitated—"my idea was to put up the prices."

"Yes, that's good. But you'll have to put 'em way up. There's no happy medium in this town. It's the three-cent pie house and Delmonico's that take in the cash every time. And there's another thing. You'll have to live through a bit of a dull season till the swagger set catch on."

"There's one of them now," said Sally, as a cloak that set faultlessly over a pair of erect shoulders sailed past. "I wonder how she will like it."

"She'll have a decided opinion, one way or another," he commented.

"But do you think you could stand two months—perhaps more, as empty as the first one?"

His manner apologized for his plain speaking.

Sally and Anne looked at each other. It was Anne who spoke.

"I don't know," she said, slowly, "I'm afraid—"

"Yes, yes, I understand," he interposed. "It takes a lot of money to keep afloat."

He sat for a space without speaking, his chin thrust forward in his hand, his narrowed eyes fixed on the point of the sugar tongs. Sally thought she had never seen him look so remote, so grave.

"It's a man's trouble, Miss Hill," he said, at last, "and it takes a man's cure." He looked at Anne's strong, nervous hands, her cleft chin. "I think you're man enough to use it." He smiled. "Mind, I'm not advising it, but here it is. Manhattan is booked for a twenty-point rise. I've had inside information. That means ten points to the good, and even odds for more. Mind, I'm not giving you advice. I'd about as soon advise a woman what to do with her soul. But there it is. You can take it or leave it. I'm in deep myself, and I'll tell you what it is; if you take it, I'll keep an eye on things for you, and put the deal

through. It's taking chances, you know."

"Oh, stocks!" Sally's eyes were scornful. "I don't see much danger in that. All our money was in stocks for years, and it proved to be the safest place in the world for it."

Sedly looked at her with an anguished regret that such divine innocence had placed itself in a position to be enlightened. Then he explained the difference between investing in U. S. S. outright and buying margins in skittish railroads.

"But what would it mean if we won?" queried Anne, whose practical experience in gambling was confined to bridge whist.

"That depends on how many shares you buy. You buy fifty shares on a ten-point margin, the stock goes up five points, you are two hundred and fifty to the good; and more or less in proportion. If it is a ten-point rise you double your money."

"And you said the thing was going up twenty?" Thus Sally, with round eyes.

The unconscious flattery that attributed to him the final word in the vagaries of Manhattan affected him with the exhilaration of a cocktail.

"If I had the say, Miss Hill, you should run it up and down like a monkey on a stick. But I'm only one of the guessers. So you will have to think it over while I go down and see what it's doing on its own account. Ring me up when you decide. You'll have to be quick to buy low."

He caught his gloves and paper from the settle, and made his unhasty farewells. But as he swung into the street they saw him begin to run.

"Dear, dear," said Sally, "I'm afraid we have kept him too long."

Anne lifted her eyes to answer, but the glance was interrupted midway. She caught herself in a stare, and turned quickly to Sally.

"Sally, that woman in the corner is going to speak to us." Her voice had a dry curiosity.

"Where? Who? The smart one?"

"Yes. Don't turn around," Anne warned.

"But we don't know her," objected Sally.

"That's the queer part of it. I've seen her before, somewhere. She reminds me——"

The light rustle of a sweeping skirt closed the sentence.

"Anne Hill!" said a throaty voice with a falling inflection.

Anne was incredulous. "Mrs. Taberd!" she cried, with a rush of recollection.

"Oh!" gasped Sally.

"I hardly expected you to remember me," said Mrs. Taberd with Anne's fingers in her faultlessly gloved palm, "but there's no mistaking your father's chin. I should have known you in Paris. And Sara—Sallie—you have changed. You were just not a school-girl when I saw you last. Five years, isn't it, since I saw you off for New York? Now, you do your mother credit." She smiled approvingly at Sally's well-dressed hair under her London walking hat.

"Yes," said Anne, with a mist of recollection blurring her vision, "you are our last memory of Chicago."

"Is it just the same?" said Sally, eagerly, "and do any of the old crowd go to your Tuesday nights?"

Mrs. Owen Taberd smiled. Her residence in Chicago had been a reluctant one, and she had turned her well-dressed shoulders upon its dirt and roar without a backward glance.

"I have just come through from there," she replied, "but for the past two years my home has been in New York. I fully intended to look you up when I came on, but unaccountably mislaid Mrs.—er—your aunt's address, and so lost track. It's the greatest good chance in the world that I should run across you in this quaint place." She glanced appreciatively from the mahogany sideboard to the hyacinth moon suspended from the center of the ceiling, and Anne's heart went out to her with a thrill of gratitude.

"Do you come here often?" she asked.

"Never before. A friend recom-

mended it. She said to eat champignons and drink sauterne, and watch the moon rise, all at once, was a combination of sensations not to be missed. And really, it is quite extraordinary." She ran a critically commanding eye along the frieze and down to the hydrangeas.

"Oh, I'm so glad," Sally began. Anne's toe on her instep turned the sentence—"that we saw you here," she ended. "It's like going home."

"The pleasure is as much mine as yours," replied Mrs. Taberd, drawing a little lizard skin book from her Japanese chatelaine. "I shan't lose sight of you children again. I'm going to tie a string to you now. What is your aunt's address?"

Anne gave Sally a look, and proceeded to enlighten Mrs. Taberd as to their change of residence.

Mrs. Taberd's eyebrows went up into two points of amused surprise. But—"all the better," she said, as she took the number of the upholstered boxes. "Now my Tuesdays are still in existence, though they have shifted to Friday. I know you must be full of engagements, but I expect you to give at least one of your evenings to an old friend." She smiled upon them the smile that had lured many a lion to her gracious *salon*.

"I am sure we would be delighted," Anne replied, ignoring Sally's covert poke.

"Well, let me see, next week. To-day is Friday! Why stand on ceremony? Why not to-night? I'll tell you why you must not refuse, why I ask you in such unsocial haste. I'm being rather more particular than usual to-night, saying good-by to a Russian diplomat, and welcoming one of our own big men—Gordon, the painter. They are shy of functions, but I knew them well on the other side, and they are going to be good to me. Is that sufficient inducement?"

"We surely couldn't have a greater inducement than Mrs. Owen Taberd herself," said Anne. Mrs. Taberd made a mental note as she gathered up her purse and lorgnon. "A woman

who can say such things as though she meant them will be a success."

"Then I am to expect you," she threw over her shoulder, as she moved toward the door.

"Mrs. Taberd, of all people," murmured Anne, as the brougham drove from the curb.

"I never was so surprised in my life," declared Sally. "I'm so glad she found us, Anne. You know I think if we hadn't been so busy we would have been a little bit lonesome."

"And she liked the Moon," cried Anne, her eyes dancing; "she really cared for it!"

"But, Anne," Sally's eyes were troubled, "how can we go to that reception to-night?"

"Why not?"

"Your frock—my hat," Sally began.

"I know, but this means such a lot more than one reception. I *think* we must manage it somehow. I feel as though we were on the eve of a big change."

"As if Mrs. Taberd, and Manhattan—"

"Exactly. But Manhattan first. And it's half-past ten, and Sedly White will have been expecting a telephone for the past half hour."

"Well, let's do it," said Sally, with the cheerful precipitation that a New York existence was teaching her. "We'll have to, you know, if we are going to do Mrs. Owen Taberd."

"Yes, I suppose we will, but—"

"Anne, what is the use of your talking it over? You know you always make up your mind first, and talk it over afterward. It's just so much waste time." Sally began energetically drawing on her gloves.

Anne went to the telephone. "5505," Sally heard her say. Then her voice dropped to an undistinguishable murmur.

"Anne never made up her mind so quickly in her life," thought Sally, as her sister came out of the butler's pantry. She threw on her furs, and seized her muff.

"Come on! We have not a minute. I've fixed everything. I'm going down

to meet Sedly at the broker's now. We must stop at the bank on the way; and somewhere else."

The sight of "somewhere else" was a slap in the face of all Sally's traditions.

"Anne," she murmured, as they turned into the doorway under the three brass balls, "Anne, you're not."

The line of Anne's lips was straight.

"Remember," she said, "your hat and my frock; and remember that we are about to invest three thousand dollars in a rapid and uncertain stock."

Sally watched her sister draw off her rings for the inspection of the shrewd-faced old Scotchman in the booth, submitted her own solitaire and cameo without a murmur, and saw with wondering eyes a number of bills delivered into Anne's firm fingers. Also slips of papers were handed out, which Anne buried in the inmost recesses of her pocketbook.

"Sedly says," said Sally, comforting both herself and her sister, who were feeling their fingers naked of their accustomed ornaments, with a sense of stripped indecency, "Sedly says if all the pocketbooks in New York could be unexpectedly collected, the percentage with pawn tickets would be ninety-nine."

Anne delivered a portion of the newly acquired greenbacks to her sister, "for your hat," she said, "and anything else you need. Unless you would rather wait till this afternoon when I get my gown. Now for Manhattan."

She disappeared in the crush of a Broadway car.

CHAPTER VI.

"The significance of names is nothing," said the poet with the dancing eye.

"Another chap said that some time ago," the painter replied, with tolerant amusement.

"And said it better?" the poet suggested with his ready laugh.

"Only because he said it first."

The artist lounged against Mrs. Owen Taberd's sixteenth century tapestry that threw into bold relief the

fine, lean lines of his young face under the thick mass of iron gray hair.

"Well, to put it in quotations, 'What's in a name?' " The poet tossed his longish hair with a faultlessly manicured hand. "There's the charming Mrs. Flower, for example. She's a work of art."

"'Nature is catching up,'" quoted the artist.

The poet frowned. Nature love was his pet pose.

"Compare her to Mrs. Riggs." He indicated the most beautiful woman in the room, "and you will see the clockwork. But Mrs. Riggs suggests your landlady and——"

"The Misses Hill," announced the clear-voiced functionary from the door.

"Sound like some country——" What the poet was about to say is not known, for as the word "country" left his lips, Sara Hill rustled into his line of vision.

"Jove!" said the painter, following with a professional eye the lovely pink of her cheek, and the upward toss of her bright brown hair, "that does nature credit!"

"Who is she? Do you know her?" the poet demanded in a low voice.

But his companion had caught sight of Anne's clear profile under her red hat, and was enjoying a pleasure life seldom granted him of late—a new sensation.

His eye followed the trail of her cream-colored skirts with an appreciative sense that here was a woman who understood the rare art of graceful motion. There was harmony in every turn and poise of her tall figure. It seemed fitting that she should be moving toward that bank of white chrysanthemums whence throbbed the strings of violins.

Anne had not seen him, but Sally, with the unseeable feminine glance, had noted the two men, apart by the door, as two vivid personalities; and as she progressed farther into the room, she saw the assemblage, not as a whole, but in separate figures or couples, a collection of bewildering but detached presences, all more or less stimulating. It struck her, even at the moment she was shak-

ing hands with Mrs. Owen Taberd, that the woman in mauve crêpe must be an extraordinarily clever person to be able to select that shade, that was not hideously transformed to dirt gray, but remained mauve in the light of the electric chandelier.

To Anne, following in her sister's wake, the rooms presented themselves as well blended arrangements of color. The scent of flowers, the voices of the violins, smoothed and soothed her with delicious, satisfying harmony. The people were as flatly impersonal as the tapestry figures along the wall. It was the final sentence of Mrs. Taberd's throaty voice that woke her to a personality.

"Miss Hill, Mr. Gordon."

Anne turned slowly, and bowed slightly. A young face under a mass of iron gray hair suddenly stood forth from the human background.

"Mr. Gordon is one of our own," the throaty voice went on; "we are glad to claim him again after Europe has held him so long. We hope we are not boring him in attempting to show our pleasure."

Mr. Gordon murmured a polite clause that to be bored in Mrs. Taberd's house was as impossible as to be shocked in Paris. Before his hostess could protest the analogy, some one struck a prodigious chord on the grand piano, and a woman with the figure and carriage of a pouter pigeon burst into song.

"Under cover of the firing shall we beat a retreat?" Anne's companion murmured. Even reduced to its lowest dimension, his voice was singularly clear.

She followed him to a deep divan muffled in rugs. From here the person of the singer was invisible, and her ringing voice, velvet in the deep tones, glassy in the high register, satisfied the ear. It was but an *obligato* to the human theme.

"She has a charming voice, don't you think?" he said, casually, "or does it grow monotonous with many hearings?"

"It is a beautiful voice. I have not heard it before," replied Anne.

"Ah?" She felt irritably that he had

subtly asked a question, and she had unwittingly answered it.

"It was insolent of me, wasn't it, to relegate you to my own berg as a matter of course, but Mrs. Owen Taberd has spoken of you as an old friend."

"We are such old friends," Anne replied, "that we have had time to lose and find each other again. And surely Mrs. Owen Taberd cannot be relegated to any one berg."

She had a vexed sense that this man, with such possibilities for being entertaining, was sitting there waiting to be entertained. She wondered how many women had purred and flattered him into this complacent quiescence. She experienced a swift resolve to show him how charming one could be, and be elusive—how provokingly interesting in monosyllables.

The painter had been surprised into something near annoyance at being thus adroitly turned from the question of his companion's residence to that of Mrs. Owen Taberd's.

"Many things are found and lost in New York." His eyes strayed idly over the restless room.

"Found—to lose?"

The insolently contrasted modulation spurred his languid curiosity. He not only turned his head, he shifted his position to face her.

"Teach me. I am two months in New York—two months old in my second childhood. You are wise in the ways of the town. Teach me."

Anne's head waved softly from side to side. The opal matrix in the hollow of her throat shifted light.

"I'm too busy to be wise."

He smiled, faint, ironical astonishment. It was as though "La Gioconda" had declared herself too busy to remain in her frame.

"Then you are fortunate above the most charming of your sex, for they are *merely* beautiful."

Anne's eyes were fixed thoughtfully on the point of her shoe, at the close of his sentence. At the beginning of hers, she shifted them to the second stud of his dress shirt.

"I wonder if I am equally flattered,

with the most charming of my sex?" Their eyes met with a flash of antagonism. He leaned forward slightly, his face almost animated.

"You," he began, "you—er—really ought to hear Kelsey's Irish ballads, a delightful rendering," he ended, irrelevantly. A fine veil of indifference had fallen across his face.

Anne, immediately aware of a sweeping approach of silk, and an unfamiliar perfume, raised her eyes swiftly to meet, first the agreeable smile of her hostess, then a pair of palely bright up-slanted eyes, incredibly delicate brows, and a smile as elusive as the perfume.

"Mrs. Flower," Anne repeated in recognition of her hostess' introduction. The name fitted the fragile grace as admirably as the mauve gown molded to the slight figure. Anne could not dismiss the mischievous fancy that the half-mourning effect of purple tassels of wistaria drooping against black hair was intentional.

The banalities that surround a sought introduction nearly approached flattery in Mrs. Flower's coolly caressing voice. Her greeting of Gordon was of a less formal nature, so much so that she called him by a short name that Anne did not catch, and, fluttering down on the other side of him, drew him into an aloofness of common interest, from which she made occasional gracious excursions in Anne's direction. It was impossible not to feel a third person, but Anne was conscious of a power in her eyes that had drawn to his indifferent face a sparkle that a sweet voice multiplying many words failed to provoke.

"Such a dear place," Anne heard the sweet voice murmur. "The color scheme would ravish you! Hyacinth blue and a gray like black pearls. Oh, it's adorable—it's Japanese. Oh, Clay, of course I don't mean the food! The food is delicious! I sent Charlotte there, and she quite loved it. And the most fascinating part of it is that it is a mystery. No one knows who owns it. Charlotte Taberd thinks it's some millionaire's fad, from the way it's gotten up."

Clayton Gordon found himself wondering what had amused Miss Hill. He was puzzled by a hinted mirth in her long eyes.

"I am giving a little dinner there next week, Clay," continued Mrs. Flower, insisting on attention, "and I shall depend on you—no, no—you must not let the players' frolic interfere, or I shall never——" she held the sentence in suspense, laughed; and again the slight figure swayed gracefully toward Anne.

"And Miss Hill, will not you and your sister join us? You know we feel Mrs. Taberd's friends immediately our own. It is an informal affair, and such a delightful place! It would interest you."

"Yes," said Anne, conscious of the unfriendly friendliness of the invitation. "It has amused me. Yes, we should be delighted."

She caught Sally's eye across the room, and they exchanged that mutual signal that is a part of the feminine code.

"Oh, going?" said Mrs. Flower with well adjusted regret. "But you must give me your address first, if you will really come to my little party. Then I can write you, when the date is determined."

Anne titillated her sense of humor with the thought of how her hostess would be electrified if she knew that her prospective guest would soon be in possession, not only of the appointed day, but also of the *menu* and table appointments for her "little party."

Over the drooping wistaria hat she met the painter's eyes that promised, and challenged, and let her pass as one in many—that left her with a vague antagonism that in no way diminished an unaccountable exhilaration.

"Excited? Of course I'm excited!" Sally braced her little feet against the hansom door and subsided into her corner with a complacent sigh. "I've been giving reasons for the past hour, to a professional soul hunter, as to why I am not his affinity. Yes, pretexts, of course. He seemed to think them encouragement—threatens to call. Anne, I never saw you with such a color!

What has got into your eyes? Was that gray-haired person so amusing?"

"Insufferable," Anne replied, "interestingly insufferable. Sally, I have a mind to make him like me."

"Oh, Anne!" Sally almost wailed. "What is the good of doing that? You know how it always ends. Remember Clarence Lewis—what a nuisance *he* was; Anne, with the Blue Moon, you haven't time!"

"Hardly as dangerous as soul hunting."

"Oh, pshaw! I haven't got one—*not* his kind. Who was that odious woman?"

"Mrs. Flower? Oh, she is agreeable enough—quite adroit, in fact. If she is not amiable it is a state of mind rather than a personal feeling."

"She's a cat," said Sally, firmly. "I wanted to say scat!"

"Nevertheless," replied Anne, "she is giving the first dinner at the Blue Moon, and *we*, Sally, we are condescendingly invited!"

CHAPTER VII.

The first thing Anne heard as she stepped from the elevator into the broker's office was a nasal drawl saying: "Manhattan a quarter — an eighth." Then the ticker ticked. Then she saw Sedly White approaching, flushed and eager.

"Mighty glad you got here just now," he said, leading her through the groups of smoking, hatted men, who turned curious glances upon the smart woman with the astonishing eyes.

"Is Miss Sara coming down to-day?" he inquired, as he established Anne in a chair before the board, where a lanky youth in shirt sleeves was languidly putting up green tickets, and exchanging opinions upon the street with the speculators.

"She had a lot of shopping to do, and some things to look after at the Moon. What is the matter, is it going down?" she added, hastily. An unwonted excitement in Sedly's manner spurred her uneasiness to alarm.

"Down! Look at it!" He nodded at the last column to the right. "It's doing stunts—it's all up in the air."

"But—but," Anne stammered in her excitement, "it's a hundred and forty-four, and——"

"You bought at a hundred and thirty-five, ma'am; nine points since ten o'clock."

"Manhattan five and a quarter!" said the nasal voice.

"Ah——" Anne drew a long breath.

"Were you expecting to see it a hundred and thirty?" Sedly inquired with a return of his habitual calm.

"I didn't know—everything seemed so uncertain."

"Yes, I know that feeling. And everything *is* pretty uncertain. See that chap there?" He jerked his head in the direction of a man with a tensely drawn mouth, who was making rapid computations at the table. "He made twenty thousand last week—wheat. Put it all into copper. There was a big rise reported; and, well, it slumped."

"Manhattan an eighth."

Anne sat forward on the edge of her chair.

"Look at that woman. She's crying. Did she buy copper, too?"

"No. Her stock has probably dropped one and a fraction, and she thinks it's all up with her," replied Sedly, tolerantly. "They are mostly like that. Mighty few women are sports, Miss Hill."

Anne looked curiously about her. The woman who had been crying was talking through the little window with the broker inside, and his soothing, assuring, explaining voice ran like an undercurrent to the persistent ticker—the intermittent drawl of the caller-out, and the desultory conversation of the observers. Immediately back of her chair a man with a white mustache and a military bearing was dividing his attention between his cigar and the volubility of his florid companion. He scarcely looked at the board. The haggard copper plunger took up his stand at the tape.

"Market's active," Sedly remarked, returning from a short excursion to the

ticker. "Oh, no. Sometimes you sit here all the morning, and never see your stock budge an inch. This is the busiest time, too."

"Manhattan four and three-quarters."

"Oh," said Anne, straightening up in alarm, "look, it's going down!"

"All right. It would be queer if it didn't take a little drop after that run."

"A quarter."

An interminable wait, during which Sedly White talked through the little window, and Anne sat still, watching the board with a sensation of dropping through quicksand.

"Never can tell about this inside information," said a man's voice behind her. "I had the same a month ago, and it ran down to twenty-nine next day."

"Manhattan one-eighth!" A long silence in which the ticker was still—the drawl was silent. Anne saw nothing in the room but the number forty-three and one-eighth.

Then the ticker began again with a suggestion of making up for lost time.

"Manhattan a quarter—four, four and a half." She gripped the arms of her chair.

"Five and a quarter—six—six!"

"Look lively now," said the assistant to the lanky youth who was losing his languor.

"Manhattan seven." There was a stir among the spectators. Several moved forward on a line, and beyond Anne's chair.

"Twenty dollars it hits fifty," said the florid man.

"Take you," replied his military companion, flicking the ash from his cigar.

"Feel encouraged?" whispered Sedly, leaning over her chair.

"I'm so excited," said Anne. "Do you think it's going far?"

"I guess," he replied, slowly, "that it's out for the high record this time. Those people are all buying." The assistant added a half to Manhattan's rising succession of coupons. "It is mildly interesting now. Hardly exciting. But if it goes up five points more, you will see a sight. They'll go crazy."

"Manhattan eight and a quarter—seven-eighths—nine—a half."

Anne's cheeks flushed.

"Miss Hill," Sedly spoke in her ear, "you would better put in an order to sell around fifty-one."

"I thought it was booked for twenty points." The idea of getting out of a rising stock was an exceedingly distasteful one.

"It is unsafe to bet on it much over fifty. And even if it makes the top, every one will be trying to sell out at once, and it may drop ten points before we——"

"Manhattan a half."

Anne followed Sedly out of the nervous tension of the outer office into the professional calm of the inner. Here she signed slips of paper with the nasal voice drawing interminably in her ears.

A clamor of voices was rising in the front office. A succession of faces, twisted and pulled out of their natural semblance by hope or fear, crowded the small window.

"Manhattan fifty."

"Quite a run on Manhattan," observed the broker, with an agreeable smile, as he handed Anne her order. "Makes a little excitement out there."

He nodded toward the door.

"A little excitement" seemed an inadequate description for the pandemonium that greeted their gaze in the outer office.

"Keep your eyes on the board and shut your ears," Sedly murmured. "I've got to see a man at the exchange—only ten minutes—right around the corner. You're safe!" He squeezed her hand warmly—congratulatory, and stepped into the elevator.

Anne obediently fixed her eyes on the green coupons, but the fluctuating voices drowning the jabbering ticker, or hanging in fearful suspense on the drawl of the caller-out, and the coupon's intermittent rise, each time higher than the drop, mounted to her brain and entered her blood, and, though she gripped the arms of her chair and sat motionless, she knew she was a plunger, out for the highest stakes.

It was after the lowest drop that the polite assistant leaned over her shoul-

der. "All right, Miss Hill. You sold out at a hundred and fifty-one," he said. "Oh, thank you." Anne arose and walked to the window. "I want to put in an order to buy at a hundred and fifty-one," she said.

The broker's eyebrows lifted.

"That stock *may* run up to sixty, Miss Hill, but"—he handed her a pen and blank—"we can't advise buying so near the top."

Anne signed. "I'd like to sell around a hundred and fifty-six," she said.

The broker took the telephone.

"Manhattan fifty-two—a quarter—three quarters—fifty-four."

"Thirty she hits sixty," said the voluble man.

"Take you."

The military man had let his cigar go out. He was breathing audibly. His companion, garrulous, flushed, was trying to make another bet.

"Manhattan fifty-five—six!"

Anne's heart stood still.

"Six and a quarter," the drawl went on, "seven." She felt suffocating.

The white-mustached soldier rushed into the inner office.

"Manhattan seven-eighths—eight and an eighth."

There was time for a dozen ticks from the ticker; then—

"Manhattan seven and seven-eighths—six—a half—a quarter—"

A shudder ran through the watchers. Before they knew it the drop was upon them. Anne's heart was climbing in her throat.

"Six—six—" the words hummed in her brain. "Manhattan six—five and a half."

She walked to the little window. "Did you—could you?" she said.

"Too quick, Miss Hill." She thought the broker eyed her pityingly. "Too many trying to sell—wait till it rises again." Anne had a feeling that it wouldn't rise, and that the broker knew this. She saw it sag another quarter, then a half, with a ghastly sensation of solid ground slipping from underfoot. The woman was gabbling frantically at her elbow. She had sold, and was garrulous with reaction from suspense.

Anne turned from the window—saw people gesticulating to one another, saw a wild-eyed trio at the tape—the copper plunger walking up and down the room. Then a voice began repeating "six—six—six" endlessly, and then, "six and a quarter," and again, "six."

Then she heard the broker speaking behind her. Some one touched her arm.

"Sit down," said Sedly White. He stood over her with a grim smile.

"Of all the plungers!" he began. "Before I ever leave you by yourself again—"

"Is it all gone?" said Anne, dully.

"You sold out at fifty-six," said Sedly. He fell into a chair. Anne began to laugh weakly.

"It's all very well to do that," he said, shaking his head at her threateningly. "But it's the sort of thing you can only do once—it's the most infernal luck I ever heard of—" he ended, in a burst of admiration. "And don't you ever dare to do it again."

CHAPTER VIII.

Anne, bursting into the Blue Moon with a sweep of snow in her wake, found Sally drooping discontentedly at their favorite table by the fireplace. She brightened to crossness at the sight of her sister.

"Anne Hill, I've waited since one o'clock, and I've sent the shad roe back twice. Where *have* you been?"

"Only on a little gamble," said Anne, trying to speak calmly.

"Sally, Sally, Manhattan went up twenty points, and we got out at the top!"

"How much did we lose?" asked Sally, dolefully.

"You innocent! We've *made* six thousand dollars!"

Sally stared dazedly at her sister.

"But how? How? It seems so horribly unfair! How could you do it the first time?"

"Beginner's luck. We bought five-point margins, and happened to sell out at the top. We've made in one morn-

ing all we've spent since we came to New York!"

"How awful!" said Sally. "Let's not do it again!"

"Wait till you see what we'll do with that money. It means a new moon, Sally. It means we can put up our prices twenty points if we want. It means a quick success. It means a place of our own, and the things we want—some of them, at least. It means we're beginning to be made."

Sally's practical eyes sparkled.

"Then let's put up the prices at once," she said, "and send for the shad roe."

While the fire purred, and the trim, blue-clad serving men went in and out on noiseless feet, they ate their luncheon with the appetite of the healthy young animals that they were, and the future took on glowing colors under their nimble tongues. Wiggins marked a feeling of success in the air, and resolved to intimate on their next business interview that such superior gifts as his were deserving of a large remuneration.

But his two employers were at the moment forgetful of the Blue Moon and all its satellites, and wrapped in discussion of the future that six thousand dollars had made possible.

They would quit the upholstered bandboxes. They would find a place where enjoyment of surroundings might be possible. Anne had yearnings toward the well-bred serenity of Washington Square. It was in the minds of both that they needed a setting for the more vivid life that seemed opening before them. They discussed it all quite gravely, and, without a moment's pause, trailed off into the inconsequential follies of the feminine wardrobe.

These were the more absorbing in view of the approaching dinner at the Blue Moon, the date of which had been doubly conveyed to them, once by the delicate, pointed characters of a flimsy missive, once by the important Wiggins with admirably disguised pleasure in the fact that a "party" had reserved one of the upstairs dining-rooms, "quite private," for the evening of the Thursday.

If Sally admitted to Anne a lively curiosity on their probable sensations on

being entertained under their own roof-tree by Mrs. Flower, Anne would not even admit to herself a greater anxiety in Clayton Gordon's possible placement at her table.

But the intervening days between the turned tide of fortune and the dinner were too full to allow of much conjecture. The first of the following week saw their small furnishings, secured from storage, together with their large trunks, sparsely scattered through a generous suite of sunny rooms on the top floor of one of those old-fashioned Knickerbocker houses that dignify lower Fifth Avenue. Here they found combined the view of the swaying trees beyond the white arch that delighted Anne's eyes, and the lift and telephone that Sally refused to live without.

They spent two blissful mornings in and out of the curiosity shops along Fourth Avenue, and were in no wise dismayed when Sedly White, called in to commend their antiques, announced that they had probably all been made in Jersey the year before.

But he approved of the large, wide-windowed drawing-room, the gaping-mouthed fireplaces, the glistening oval of the dining-room table, and was dumb with admiration before Sally's green chiffons, and Anne's trailing black laces. He had dropped in on Thursday night in the hope that Sally might consent to go, even on so short notice, to see the "Sultana of Soudan," a hope that deserted him when his ravished eyes were confronted by the two ladies in an array that unmistakably denoted a formal function.

He could not help a keen pang of something he named curiosity as to who would sit next to Sally at that dinner; while she, following her sister into the four-wheeler, wondered, with a vague distaste, who Sedly would invite in her place. The retrospection did not prevent her looking eagerly from the carriage window, as they turned the corner, to catch a glimpse of the lantern swinging against the white perspective of the street, casting a dancing circle of greenish light on the snow beneath it.

Even as she looked, a man and a woman in evening dress passed under its luminous eye, into the doorway. She noted as she and Anne passed through the sparsely-filled lower dining-room that her sister was holding herself very straight, with her head a little forward, and past experience had taught Sally this attitude presaged immediate happenings.

Emerging from the half light of the stair into the glow of the second dining-room, they perceived themselves to be a little late. Just late enough to waken in the waiting company a nice curiosity as to the persons for whom the oysters were suspended—just soon enough to avoid rousing the animosity of man toward those who keep him from his food.

Anne, shaking hands with her hostess, was acutely conscious of Clayton Gordon's lazily-interested eyes, which, when she looked into them squarely, substituted for interest, amusement. Her bridled irritation would have flagged could she have read his thought. For, as she took her place between a white-mustached financier and a quick-smiling *litterateur*, "That woman," he decided, "is more sophisticated than I thought. Or is that eye trick unconscious?"

So much for a black lace dress! For even a man who has painted his way across two continents, and flirted with a few crowned heads, a man who can depict a velvet curtain with two sweeps of his brush, and an arm with a turn of his wrist, cannot always differentiate between a woman's clothes and her personality.

"So sweet of you to come! I was almost afraid you were going to disappoint me, after I had raised every one's expectations to such a pitch—" Thus the hostess to Anne, with a caressing voice, and an unseeing eye, that sparkled and renewed expressions as she turned to Clayton Gordon with an inaudible murmur.

"Bad form," was Sally's mental comment. She was taking note of the position of the forces at the other end of the table, like a general before battle.

If Anne intended attack in open field, Sally would not fail to support her. She found herself fairly well flanked by the poet with the dancing eye. But she thought it would be possible to hold him in play with one hand, if relief were necessary at the other end of the line. It may have been this very casual attitude toward him that made the poet so eager.

A strong physical magnetism and a fine understanding for the intricacies of flirtation had won him a reputation among women for sympathy, and the secondary rôle he found an unaccustomed and distasteful part. And it is probable he had forgotten that such imperishable roses as Sally displayed could bloom on the cheek of woman. Therefore, for the first twenty minutes she found all attention necessary for this exacting neighbor. But with the arrival of the fish, she saw an opportunity to reconnoiter.

The white-mustached individual on Anne's left was ignoring his Moselle, and talking eagerly at, almost into, her ear. As Sally looked, Clayton Gordon, whose situation on the field, and plan of campaign, may have borne a resemblance to her own, leaned forward and threw a challenge into the *tête-à-tête* opposite. Making note of the promptness with which Anne picked up the conversational gauntlet, Sally marked, also, the distraught expression that clouded over the pointed meaning in Mrs. Flower's eyes, the listening tilt of her head, as she purred to her infatuated left-hand neighbor.

"Quite right, Miss Hill," Gordon was saying. "The difficulty is that in life you can't buy margins. You invest outright."

"Still, with divorce so common—" threw in Mrs. Flower.

"I suppose there are places where you don't have to gamble," said Anne, answering Gordon, "but New York isn't one. It's in the air—we breathe it—we live it."

"Too busy to be wise?"

Sally felt some veiled understanding between the painter's words and Anne's look. At the same moment she saw

Mrs. Flower turn to him as sharply as if he had addressed her. Then, with a glow of unwonted appreciation, she saw the long, impassive face of Wiggins at Mrs. Flower's elbow—saw the question that perforce turned the hostess' attention.

"Some find wisdom in total suspension of thought," Anne replied.

"But only beauty can mercifully afford a suspension of thought," interrupted the suave financier. Anne's head turned toward him, but her eyes flashed sidelong across the table, as she said:

"But won't you admit that some are fortunate enough to be more than merely beautiful?"

Sally, straining her ears for the reply, was suddenly conscious of a hiatus in the steady flow of conversation on her left—of a risen inflection.

"Oh, yes, indeed!" she said, turning vivaciously.

"I asked you," said the poet, querulously, "whether you thought twenty per cent. a fair profit on an edition *de luxe*?"

"Well, isn't it?" inquired Sally, with composite innocence. "Most people are glad and thankful to get six on their investment."

She found she had created opportunity for a whimsical dissertation on difference of base metal and mettle of mind, that gave her one ear for the cross fire at the head of the table.

"At least," the financier was saying, "you must admit that a woman could never have composed such a wine list, nor regulate such an admirable service."

"I believe the artistic sense is without sex," the painter replied, composedly, to his interlocutor; then, pointedly to Anne: "There is a very distinct and interesting personality infused into this place, don't you think? I find myself curiously tracing the character of the creator." A faint pink bloomed in Miss Hill's cheeks.

"Without doubt it was a labor of love," she said, lightly.

"I am not sure that it is not one of your own delightful creations, Clay," said Mrs. Flower, with a gentle laugh,

and an undulating turn of her pliant neck.

"Oh, hardly sufficiently admirable," suggested the financier.

"Too much so," Gordon replied, snatching at an opportunity to avoid the impending personalities of Leslie Flower's question. He showed a provoking tendency to put swiftly aside, almost ignore, her remarks, and directed an intermittent fire of observation aimed nicely between Anne and the financier, evidently with the intention of turning the latter, perforce, to the person on his right. But, like habitually successful generals, Gordon underestimated the enemy's strength.

Leslie Flower's laugh was playfully indulgent.

"Clay, an artist who has had Europe by the ears has no right to underestimate his own capacity." She laid herself open to an unexpected feint.

"An artist who has had Europe by the ears, would not," Gordon replied, promptly. "He wouldn't even have to do anything to prove it. Would he, Miss Hill?" There was a twinkle in his eye that evoked a singular light in Anne's.

"Oh," she laughed. "I had not noticed it."

"One cannot see everything all the time," murmured Mrs. Flower, deprecatingly.

"Nor miss everything all the time," Anne suggested.

"Some are born everything, some acquire everything, and some have everything thrust upon them!" Mrs. Flower paraphrased, gayly.

"And all equally unfortunate," Gordon ended. He had smiled at the latter half of the witticism, but as he was looking at Anne he gave the particularly annoying effect of attributing it to her.

Leslie's eyes were half closed.

"My dear Clay, are you not a little moon struck?"

"No. Only a little dazzled by a new star." The financier's look challenged Anne's, as boldly as his sentence.

"Starring is a precarious experiment," she replied, with a look, passing

the compliment addressed to herself on to Mrs. Flower.

"True," said the hostess, softly, "we are told that a successful star," she looked from Anne to the financier, "requires beauty, and an angel."

Sally saw the moment for action had arrived.

"And may we not find the two in one?" inquired the financier, with all his black eyes for Anne.

"From a theatrical standpoint, perhaps; socially, no," said the younger Miss Hill, from the other end of the table.

Mrs. Owen Taberd, hearing the words *en route*, laid them by for future inspection.

The financier's ear was caught no less by the daring words than his eye by the fetching contrast of two very pink cheeks over a fluff of grass-green chiffon.

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women," he quoted, with facile appreciation for any word emanating from so attractive a source.

"Merely plungers?" said Sally, looking directly across the poet, one elbow on the table.

"Speculation in any emergency is dangerous." The man of affairs caressed his white mustache.

"Even with inside information?" Sally inquired. She turned a deprecating smile upon the petulant poet, before she again bent toward the financier. She saw him tilt his champagne glass in leaning toward her, and felt that she might key her next remark to a commonplace. She was uncomfortably aware that the man and woman to her right had ceased their conversation to listen to hers. But Anne and Clayton Gordon were now talking uninterruptedly across the mound of cyclamen between, and Mrs. Flower was smiling an unremitting smile upon the long-neglected man at her left.

Leslie Flower's dinners had, heretofore, showed a tendency to follow the hostess' example, breaking up into murmurous *tête-à-têtes*; but the daring initiative of Gordon and the unruly Sally seemed to have demoralized the com-

pany. They found themselves indulging in duets at long range, and calling gay personalities at one another across the table, in the French manner.

That it was a manner disapproved by the hostess was not apparent, but she picked up her guests with her eyes, almost before the liqueurs were finished.

Sally swallowed a smile that was half appreciation at the unallayed cheer with which Mrs. Flower maneuvered her guests out of the dining-room, and down the stairway through the waning glow of the deserted Blue Moon.

Following in the wake of Anne and Clayton Gordon, she caught his low-voiced question:

"Then I may come?"

And Anne's unconcerned answer:

"Oh, surely. Tea always at five."

Sally thought of the unadjusted waste of their drawing-rooms, of their tea service, wrecked in the last move, and it seemed to her weariness a mightier undertaking than the plunge in the stocks.

CHAPTER IX.

Even a rise of fifty per cent. in the *menu* of the Blue Moon failed to induce the lean period predicted by Sedly White.

Leslie Flower's little dinner, and the continuous praise of the all-powerful Mrs. Taberd, spread its fame among that froth of society that is even more fastidious than society itself. Harassed editors, both male and female, escaped into its harmonious calm for their luncheon hour.

The smart eccentricity of the literary woman whose very indifference spelled success, consorted with well-tailored conventionality to whom success was a birthright. Night saw the sign of the Blue Moon underscored by a line of diminishing carriage lights. Its radiance fell on the fine white faces of scholarly rakes; on the amiably indifferent eyes of moneyed vagabonds; on the small, well-dressed heads of graceful *dilettantes*, trailing their chiffons up its

stair to exotic dinners. The complacent Wiggins, reveling in this fairly good substitute for his native atmosphere, daily waxed more competent, and more insufferable to his underlings. But only occasional murmurs reached the ears of its owners.

The once erratic machinery ran smoothly in accustomed grooves. Their balance at the bank increased with their leisure, though it is to be confessed that at the first of the month, when the bills were paid, that balance looked unconscionably slim. But every one lived up to the last cent; and had it been suggested to them a business that spends all it makes is hardly successful, they would have scorned the adviser for over-cautions.

Mrs. Cowden Clark shook her head over their "reckless extravagance," until the ostrich tip on the apex of her jet bonnet quivered. It appeared that the *menu* of the Blue Moon was all that consoled her for their "waste of money, and mode of life." It was a mode that Sally and Anne enjoyed to the full extent of youth, and health, and good spirits.

After a late breakfast they spent an hour at the Blue Moon overseeing the overseers. This they conducted with caution, to give no clew to the increasing curiosity concerning the backers of this favored resort. It was known that Wiggins had been offered money for the well-covered name. But custom induced a feeling of security. They had ceased to look behind them on going into the office, or to start on coming out. Sometimes, indeed, the Blue Moon oversaw itself when Anne had an early engagement at the tailors, or Sally a stupendous shopping list; or both a formal luncheon. And even early dinner lasts till opera time, and formal functions to late suppers. It was no wonder the Blue Moon had become a usual affair. Success had come upon them so suddenly, had surprised them so completely, that they were caught up and carried away by it before they fully realized its appearance.

If much wonder had been expressed at the outset at the "wholesale manner

in which Mrs. Owen Taberd was exploiting these two outsiders," it was stilled in the swift popularity of her *protégées*.

The same faculty that had devised the Blue Moon had perceived intuitively that "social success," like a painting, demands the perfect background. It was as much the air of their surroundings, as the personal charm of these girls, that decided Mrs. Owen Taberd in her "wholesale exploitation."

There was a freshness, a spontaneity in their hospitality that stimulated the jaded interest of a set that had fallen into a well-worn treadmill of recognized entertainment.

People coming first in idle curiosity, returned with a surety of meeting "some one worth knowing." Anne refused the rôle of lion tamer suggested by Mrs. Owen Taberd, and lions, finding themselves not requested to roar, roped off from the audience, came with simplicity, and stayed with pleasure.

Clayton Gordon had called a few days after Leslie Flower's dinner, and came intermittently, with an increasing interest that overcame the man's antagonism to the woman who had moved him against his will.

Among the crowd on those occasional Tuesday nights, when their doors were open formally to their little world, that antagonism was whetted to almost anger, by the long, gray eyes glancing sidelong, in that look of which he felt so uncertain, at twenty clever nobodies.

But there were rare occasions when a quartet was all the large drawing-room contained, and with two of these merged in background, he could watch from the wide divan, the long fingers racing on the keys, the long throat turning softly from side to side, and the free curve of arm through the lace sleeve.

Then antagonism and irritation were swallowed in the melodious sounds that rippled from her finger tips. She seemed to be playing them into tune with one another. But one shining glance over the shoulder could dissolve the spell. He felt inconsequently that any woman so self-reliant and so clever

was not to be trusted, and that one less clever would fail to understand him. He asked himself whether a pretty feline like Leslie Flower were not the safer type, but he found her subtle gambols less entertaining than of yore, and himself vaguely dissatisfied after three days' failure to encounter Miss Hill.

Her sister he looked upon as a vivacious child. And certainly she bore one of childhood's most distinguished traits—astuteness. She had summed up Gordon's character to Anne in one blunt sentence. "A fascinating pig," said Sally, blandly, thereby incurring a reply that nearly squelched her.

"There's no reason in talking like that, Anne Hill," she replied, valiantly. "You said exactly that to him, in beautiful innuendoes, the other night, and then wondered why he went early."

But Anne's innuendoes and sense of uncalled-for desertion were alike involuntary. And she put down her growing interest as due to excitement in a well-played game. Certainly it is eventful to be dined and flowered by the man who is himself the event of the season. This might have caused fewer comments were it not that formerly Clayton Gordon had received more attention than he had tendered. In the beginning this was brought about because he was slow to interest, and in his case women were quick. Later it became habit. Thus it was impossible that the vivacity of his attitude toward Miss Hill should pass unnoticed.

Clayton Gordon was one of the few men in the set who was known, positively, to be matrimonially unsupplied, and competition had been keen until Leslie Flower had succeeded in temporarily capturing his wandering attention. Now that he seemed to be transferring that attention, the matter was gossip over all tea tables, nor did her friends, who had striven with Leslie for his favor, omit to mention it to her.

But Leslie Flower was quite equal to receiving this information with equanimity, and venting her ill-humor in a perfectly amiable manner. She had learned that society is ready to tolerate

any unpleasantness that is not obvious. To herself she admitted not more than ill humor, but felt, nevertheless, the cold determination to secure Clayton Gordon finally and substantially, by what means and at what cost were immaterial.

She knew that her intricacy pleased him, that her artistic instincts satisfied him, and she reckoned not without reason, that this new, bewildering interest out of the way, he would return to his old allegiance.

Her natural antagonism toward her sex was increased by the fact that these outsiders, whom she had been prepared to patronize, were rivaling her entertainments, and she saw the time approaching when their prestige might prove her eclipse.

The women she had formerly seen fit to dispose of had always unwittingly supplied her with a weapon in a not unblemished past. Nor were facts in these pasts absolutely necessary. It was quite possible for Leslie Flower to find her own facts on some one else's insinuations. But when no past was apparent, and her enemy only exhibited a tendency to an eminently successful future, she found herself at a loss.

But having been taught the advantages of tenacity and patience, she held this motive in reserve, and devoted her attention to the various managements whereby she kept a footing near the top of her slippery society.

She had invited Mrs. Mowbray, of Newton, her cousin three times removed, to luncheon, since Mrs. Mowbray knew an opulent matron who knew an exalted personage whom Mrs. Flower felt would be an addition to her drawing-room. And Mrs. Mowbray, obliged to spend that day in New York shopping, and being a thrifty soul, found it advisable to accept the invitation.

Leslie, who never conversed with women without a definite purpose in view, was approaching her subject by devious paths; and, indeed, sighted success, and felt her stolid *vis-à-vis* well in thrall, when a murmur of two voices and a sable stole brushing her arm,

brought Mrs. Mowbray's head around with a jerk.

"Anne Hill!" she ejaculated. The taller of the two women bowed, smiled and passed on. Mrs. Flower was surprised out of indirection.

"Do you know her?" she asked, quickly.

"Certainly. I knew both the girls when they resided with their aunt, Mrs. Cowden Clark, a noble woman, one of my closest friends. It was a great grief to her—the willful manner in which they left her roof."

"Indeed!" Mrs. Flower's tone was deprecating. "But Newton might seem a limited field for two women with so much *esprit* and money."

Mrs. Mowbray sat up very straight. "So much what?" she said.

"Money."

Mrs. Mowbray snorted. "Their income was enough to keep them in gloves, a mere pittance. But I believe they have taken up china painting since they came to New York, and Anne Hill was always very extravagant."

"She has exquisite taste," Mrs. Flower murmured. She had forgotten the original object of this luncheon. She had found another even more engrossing. Her face wore a satisfied, reminiscent smile as she drove homeward down Fifth Avenue, a smile that returned at intervals throughout a quiet dinner—a smile which her temporary adorer ticketed angelic.

Later, during the intricate processes of dressing, this expression resolved itself into a half formed scheme. She had expected to go to the Hill reception that night, and she had arranged a little scene with Clayton Gordon that she felt confident of carrying through with success. But in the face of her discovery, her pre-arranged farce sunk to insignificance. She abandoned it and flung herself upon irrefutable facts with exultation.

It was the stress of this emotion that drove the unaccustomed color to her cheeks, and the pointed glitter into the seldom-lit depths of her pallid eyes, as she trailed over the threshold of the

Misses Hill's drawing-room. In the soft light of tall, clustered candles the room glowed in indefinite silver pinks, like the heart of a pale rose. The azaleas that banked the fireplaces hinted spring. It was the spring song of Grieg that the zithers and guitars were playing.

Mrs. Flower was well aware that these rosy surroundings were an admirable setting for her mauve draperies, and that the perfume of the purple hyacinths in the hollow of her arm was intoxicating.

Sara Hill's was the first hand she pressed. Sally did not have to resort to mauve to be original. She wore dead white—a color whose very proximity made Mrs. Flower uncomfortable. But Leslie found herself regretting that she had not thought of plain jade ornaments first.

"I would love to know what the engaging serpent is up to now," Sally thought, as her eyes followed the lady's sinuous track through the crush of crêpes and laces, and black dinner coats. Then she awoke to the fact that the white mustached financier had been holding her hand an unorthodox length of time, caught a steely glitter in the eye of Sedly White, who was supplying a female bore with champagne punch, turned with a sense of relief to Mrs. Owen Taberd's platitude.

Leslie Flower, bowing left and right, here offering her fingers, or laying them lightly on the arm of some intimate acquaintance—there pausing for a sentence, held a swerving but undeflected course toward the pink azaleas at the opposite end of the room. She left a trail of murmurous comment in her wake. She had hoped to see Clayton Gordon by the way, and have the satisfaction of doling him a ravishing smile, and a breath of hyacinth in passing.

It was annoying to find him arrived at her goal before her, yet more annoying not to have the satisfaction of dissolving a *tête-à-tête*. Anne was the fourth of a lively quartet, the wife of a successful painter, a sparkling woman, a lately arrived sculptor with a witty tongue, and Gordon, really awake and

notably expanding. They reflected an atmosphere of good fellowship.

Anne, in spite of her elaborate amber gown and knowingly dressed hair, showed the unconscious gayety of a child. At the instant of Leslie's arrival the climax of some story convulsed them, and they turned, laughing, as with an impulse to pull her into the joke, but stopped. For it was impossible to pull Leslie Flower into a joke. She always turned it into a *double entendre*.

Unconsciously the conversation shifted from the objective to the personal; unconsciously the mirthful enthusiasm in Anne Hill's eyes flagged, and was supplanted by a subtler glint.

Leslie Flower, puzzling to put a finger on the weakest spot in this engaging quartet, that had been enjoying itself with altogether too much frank good-humor, lighted upon a method not only above suspicion, but even commendable. The zithers rippling through "Traümerlei" gave her the clew. From music in general to musicians in particular is a short step, and—

"Ah, do, dear Miss Hill," Leslie pleaded to Anne's half-amused objections. "Prof. Hertzmann, Clay, too, have been raving over your playing, and they are fastidious connoisseurs. After that you cannot refuse!"

So amid the urgent assent of several voices, Anne was carried away in the direction of the piano.

Clayton Gordon's feeling of acute annoyance was toward this unoffending, violet thing, who had suddenly extinguished the light of his lady's enchantingly candid vivacity. He would have preferred some position whence he could watch Anne's cleft chin, down bent from her violin, but Mrs. Flower selected the silvery green seclusion of the little reception-room, opening from the rose drawing-room, where lights were shaded, and interruption was improbable.

"Such a wonderful touch—a deeply emotional nature——" Leslie cooed, as the first chords throbbed from the violin strings.

"Very."

The monosyllable surprised her. She hoped Clay was not in one of his ugly moods. It was impossible she should fathom the cause of his annoyance—that she should have divined and repeated to him what he also had divined and repeated, but only to himself.

In fact, she had divined nothing, but merely seized upon the first agreeable commonplace available. As for rebuff—that was an obstacle to be circuted.

"I must confess that Miss Hill baffles me," pursued Mrs. Flower. "She is a reserved and subtle nature, difficult to understand. I find," she added, drooping pensively, "at the end of two months we are but the mere acquaintances we were in the beginning."

Gordon was able to smile good-naturedly at this, for he felt that he had, that night, for the first time, pierced through the armor of Anne's reserve and seen a glimpse of the real woman.

Leslie only perceived that she had pleased him, and continued with confidence.

"She seems purposely to hold one off—several women have spoken to me," she added, piously, remembering one, of the tortoise-shell cat variety.

"Indeed?" drawled Gordon, much amused.

"Still, those deep natures are worth while understanding, don't you think so, Clay?" The violet appealed safely to his better judgment. "Sara is very different; a frank, sweet child, quite a beauty among the boys."

Gordon remembered the poet whom Leslie had once numbered in her train with a smile.

"But both are girls of very superior talent," she concluded. "It is astonishing, the success they must have made in their work, and in such a short time, too!"

"Success? Work?" Gordon looked puzzled.

"Why, yes," Mrs. Flower hastened to explain, "china painting, you know."

"China painting?" He was bewildered. He could not reconcile such an insipid art with either of the Misses Hill.

"Oh, I dare say they dabble in lots

of things—all women do," he replied, tolerantly.

"Oh, my dear Clayton, *no!* It is their business!"

"Business? My dear *Leslie!* Two women with money to burn engaging in business!"

Leslie Flower looked down.

"Money? Oh, no, Clay—they hadn't a cent when they came to New York—a mere pittance. An old friend of theirs—a Newton woman—mentioned it to me quite casually the other day. They came down here and took up china painting; and really, though they must be wonderfully successful, they are marvelous managers to do things so exquisitely on so little. That is where their great cleverness comes in. It's nothing short of genius! Positively I couldn't do it on twelve thousand a year," she ended, magnanimously.

Gordon looked at her in baffled curiosity. He could not but admit to surprise at her revelation. He was an adroit reader of motives into action, but he confessed himself puzzled—yes, and uneasy.

Mrs. Flower sipped her punch and watched him covertly. She knew he would be forced to admit china painting a poor excuse for the extravagance of the drawing-room, the banks of azaleas, the champagne on the table before him.

The dying wail of the violin, falling to a whisper, that merged in reverberant silence, made him lean forward for a glimpse of Anne, the violin falling from her chin, turning her slow smile toward congratulation. He looked back at Leslie with much the change of expression that might pass in a man's eyes on looking from a Diana to a kitten.

"Not much china painting visible here," he said, bantering her lightly.

"No—they keep it wonderfully well in the background."

He felt inexplicably stung to resentment, but before he could answer a shadow fell across the threshold, and a Juno in jet was exclaiming and purring in concert with Mrs. Flower. She met Clayton Gordon with guarded coyness. This was Mrs. Torry, an amateur siren,

and intimate of Leslie's. These two friends had often whetted their tongues and their reputations on one another, and malicious acquaintances suggested that their bond remained unsevered only for fear of mutual revelation of indiscreet confidences.

It was Mrs. Torry's first appearance at the Misses Hill's Tuesday nights, and she was full of exclamatory appreciation, interpolated with meaning glances at Gordon, aimed as much at Leslie's armor as at his interest. The anæmic individual who had followed in the wake of Mrs. Torry's robust charms exchanged an understanding glance with Gordon. Anything to escape the fusillade of commending criticism. The two men fell into a commonplace topic, through the lagging sentences of which, clauses exchanged by the women reached them.

"Yes—isn't it wonderful how they manage!"

"They can't make *much!* China painting isn't a lucrative business." Giggle from Mrs. Torry.

"Strange to select such a calling—such a variety open to women!"

Some intonation in the latter half of the sentence made Clayton Gordon rise and go to the door. He wondered why the gods, if they must create certain people, could not have made them dumb.

"Going?" said Mrs. Torry.

"My dear lady, you have cut me out—absolutely excluded me," he replied, turning.

The hurt reproach in Leslie Flower's eyes made him wonder if he had not judged their owner harshly. After all, she couldn't help being a gossip, and a puss. Those two were the least of woman's sins.

Nevertheless, he lounged across the room toward where his strangely beleauded hostess was standing among the palms, encouraging the banal compliments of a voluble bore. Leslie saw him go with contentment. She knew it took time for doubt to root, but she felt no uncertainty of success. She did not, however, leave herself time for contemplation. She drifted about with

the various human tides, and sowed her discovery only in fertile ground. She breathed not a hint to Mrs. Owen Taberd, and the fact of that lady's immediate departure for Europe was a high card in her game. She avoided all mention of the peculiar genius of the Misses Hill to Sedly White, upon whom she looked with the fear and curiosity of the *intrigante* for the person of straightforward penetration. But she saw fit to let fall just a hint in passing the sparkling Mrs. Gifford, the wife of the successful painter.

Mrs. Gifford raised her brows in polite incredulity, and observed pleasantly that all women had to be managers, and the best were those who managed their own affairs.

To her husband she said as they drove homeward: "I wish I did not have to ask that woman to our afternoons."

And he: "Great Scott! Clara, half the men would stay away!"

"Your reputations are beyond injury," she replied with a laugh that ended in a frown. Leslie Flower's words stuck, in spite of herself. And she liked Anne Hill.

CHAPTER X.

Sally and Anne, unconscious of the new lime light that was being turned on their achievements, saw the backs of their last guests with relief.

However great has been one's amusement, one's excitement, four hours of unremitting standing, of unceasing vigilance for other people's comfort and entertainment are exhausting. And in the degree of the height of the excitement, so deep is the reaction.

Anne had been elated beyond her wont by a feeling of understanding between herself and Gordon that had for the first time dissolved hostility. And his good-night, lacking his habitual suave grace, had a direct, an almost brusque, emotion that by its very abruptness left her with a thrill. As she surveyed the empty rooms she could

not account for a feeling that amounted to depression.

"Come to bed," she called to the more elastic Sally.

"In a minute," answered a voice from the reception-room; "Sedly's here."

"Oh!" Anne smiled upon them somewhat wearily. "Then I shall tell Mimi to wait. Good-night."

"There." Sally turned to her companion as the rustle of her sister's skirts passed down the hall. "Isn't that enough hint for you?"

"I seem to have had a good many hints to-night," he replied, moodily, "and not much beside."

"You needed them," said Sally, cheerfully. Long ago all her awe of Sedly had vanished, and a slightly overbearing attitude he had developed of late toward the men she saw fit to favor had caused her to treat him with some severity. To-night she was specially pleased with herself. The poet, of whom Mrs. Flower had gently warned her, as a person dangerous to young girls, had seen fit to lay himself and his intermittent fortune at her feet. As he was known for a difficult bachelor, easy to a certain pitch and then prone to shy, she felt it quite an achievement, and herself a little regretful that she had not been able to accept him.

"I suppose you will be saying next," replied the goaded Sedly, "that that long-haired freak needed encouragement!"

"Do you mean Mr. Bourke? Did his manner indicate any need of it?" Sally inquired, carelessly. "When you speak of my friends, I wish you would speak of them properly."

"I would if this one deserved it—the posing pup!"

"That will do," said Sally, decidedly.

"The most I can say for him is that he is comparatively harmless; but that white crook—that Murray—he is not fit to look at you!"

"Really? I have found *him* most agreeable," she murmured, provokingly.

"It's all a woman's reputation is worth to be seen talking to him. I am

going to ask you not to see him any more."

"Since how long, and by what authority," Sally inquired, softly, "have you been selecting my friends and acquaintances?"

"By the right any man takes upon himself when he sees a woman in danger!" he replied, flushing.

"Danger?" Sally mocked. "Really, you flatter him. You overestimate his interest."

"I estimate the quantity of every man's interest in you by my own. The quality is another matter!"

"Indeed," said Sally, struggling with her quickening breath and rising color. "Of course it is natural to consider one's own qualities the finest. Perhaps *they* think—"

"I don't give a damn what they think. I hate 'em for what they are; and I hate 'em because they love you—because I love you!"

He had risen excitedly. He threw his confession at her like a challenge to pick up if she dared. In some diabolical way he had made her the suitor—he had shifted all blame, all responsibility upon her in three words, and she hated him for it!

"Don't talk to me like that! How dare you say such things!" she cried, passionately.

"That's the explanation you asked for!" His eyes glared into hers. "I'm not good at invention. If I didn't love you I'd care. I hate to see Murray hold your hand! I hate to see that conceited pup with his love locks, sniggering to himself at adding you to his string of episodes. I'd hate to see you surrounded by a bunch of worn-out *roués*. Yes, I know it's not pretty. But it's God's truth! And Sally, I love you! I love you! I don't know how to say it, but I want to take care of you. Sally, look at me. Don't you understand?"

He saw her half averted face with a sudden spasm of loneliness. It came to him that this slim young woman with the angry eyes was a stranger to the girl with whom he had driven up Broadway less than six months ago. It

did not occur to him that if he had begun with the appeal, the fortunes of war might have been reversed. As it was, he had set in motion that incomprehensible machine, the feminine, and the consequences were his.

"I understand," she began in a level voice, "that you are taking a great deal upon yourself when you call into question, not only my taste, but my discretion. And you further insult me by wanting to take care of me"—her voice broke—"as if I were a pet dog! Of course it's nice of you to be sorry for me, but I'm quite able to take care of myself."

Sedly, dazed, searching for a reason, where he should have considered an emotion, proceeded to pour oil on the fire in the lamentable fashion of men in such an emergency.

"You don't mean that, Sara," he said, gravely. And Sally, looking stubbornly away, did not see his twitching face. She only felt her self-command ebbing in a strange rage.

"I mean every word I've said. Haven't you done enough? Won't you please go away—now! If you don't go away instantly I shall scream out loud! I *never* want to see you again!"

The less we understand, the more room for suffering. Sedly White flung out of the house as little at reason with events as Sally, who spent the night in tears.

CHAPTER XI.

The shrill ringing of the telephone at the early hour of seven the following morning invaded Anne's ear like a voice in her dreams. She stirred half awake. It ceased. She drowsed, and woke again to hear her sister's voice.

"Yes—who are you? Wiggins? What? Yes—immediately, Wiggins."

"What's the matter?" Anne murmured, sitting up, drugged with sleep. "Blue Moon," replied Sally, appearing in the doorway, her wrapper huddled about her, her hair tumbled on her shoulders.

"At *this* hour," moaned Anne. "The cook again?"

"No—this time it's the steward. He and Wiggins were both trying to talk over the telephone at once. Don't laugh! It's no laughing matter. The steward sounds like leaving instantly—and no one else understands that consignment of claret."

Anne slid to the floor. So great was her haste that she failed to note Sally's discolored eyes and pale cheeks. Indeed, she was not well aware until she closed the outside door behind her, and felt the nipping morning air. She saw the budding trees beyond the Washington arch, the faint green silvering the ovals of the square, and in spite of her anxiety she felt her spirits buoyed up and lifted by the quickening spring.

She was almost blithe as she entered the Blue Moon, and not the scowls of the outraged steward, nor the maddening sycophancy of the self-righteous Wiggins could dash her elation. The ease with which she adjusted the steward's wrongs may have been, in part, due to her mood.

Having successfully poured oil on the machinery of her cuisine, she drank a cup of coffee, at her favorite table, quite unconscious of the admiring interest of two early masculine breakfasters. She was oblivious of her surroundings. She was engaged in the delightful occupation of discovering entirely new and bewildering phases of feeling—emotions she had not experienced, a mental attitude not to be accounted for. Indeed, she did not attempt to account for it, but pressed on her quest like a discoverer of a strange continent. Wiggins said: "Anything else, madam?" twice before she heard him.

Then she found that she was late—nine o'clock already, and she had a long file of correspondence to look over before her music lesson at ten. Reaching home fresh and blowsy from the impertinences of the March wind, she found Sally, very languid and distraught, in her morning jacket, seated alone at the little breakfast table. She laid down the last of her mail as Anne came breezily in.

"Still breakfast!" cried the energetic one. "What a lot of letters!"

"I had an interruption," replied Sally, with an almost imperceptible inflation of her nostrils. "In fact, we had a caller."

"Who?" said Anne, carelessly, turning over her mail.

"Mrs. Flower."

Anne whirled.

"At this time in the morning! What did she come for?"

"That's just what you can't find out," replied Sally. "She said she lost a lace handkerchief here last night, but she did not seem especially anxious to look. She was very much concerned about you."

"About me?"

"Why, of course the dining-room door was open to the drawing-room, and of course Mimi didn't have sense enough to take her into the reception-room. And she saw the table laid for one. So she said we mustn't be formal, and came in, and sat down, and hoped you weren't ill, right away, before mentioning 'handkerchief.' I said 'no.' Then she asked if you were out of town—when she saw you *here* last night, at *midnight*. Did you ever hear of such colossal nerve! Tell her? Of course I told her nothing. I simply ignored the impertinence.

"So then she and Mimi and I scraped around for the handkerchief, and didn't find it. And she went, hoping you were not overworking! Now I'd like to know"—Sally reared her head fiercely—"what she's after?"

The sisters stared at one another across the breakfast table.

"I don't understand it at all," Anne announced, finally. "Perhaps she was prying on general principles. Sally, child, what have you done to your eyes—they're sights! You've been crying!"

"I wouldn't wonder," replied Sally, drearily.

"Sally, you didn't have any trouble with Sedly last night?" Anne demanded, anxiously.

"Oh, yes, we had trouble. I wonder why men get so insufferable when they love you. He made it impossible for me to do anything but send him away,

and then didn't seem to understand why."

"You sent him away? Sedly!"

"He left me no choice," replied the listless Sally. "I had to, and it's all very wretched, and we won't talk any more about it, please."

"Sally," said Anne, her cleft chin in the hollow of her palm, her eyes steadily upon her sister's face, "I believe you love him."

"Well, I don't," said Sally, waking up. "I loathe him!" She went to the piano and began playing "Absence" viciously.

Anne, her eyes on her correspondence, was thinking that this disagreement was the result of the simultaneous irritation of two quick tempers—that it should adjust itself in the course of a few days. She was very sanguine that morning. The one thing that, like a pricking pin, continually teased and irritated her, was the mysterious reason for Leslie Flower's early call.

Neither she nor Sally were quite prepared to give credence to the lace handkerchief.

Neither was Clayton Gordon prepared to give credence to the train of thought insinuated to him by Leslie Flower. The immediate effect of her significant flatteries concerning Anne and Sally was to rouse in him a degree of partisanship that surprised himself. But at the same time the insinuations lay at the back of his brain, and baffled and annoyed him: baffled, because they hinted a mystery that he told himself must have a simple explanation; annoyed him, that such thoughts should stay with and haunt himself, as a matter of importance to himself.

Stray fragments of conjecture and hypothesis, accumulating with passing days, met him at afternoon tea—across dinner tables, even at the club, with galling frequency. Compliments that ceased to be compliments in connection with the Hills' known circumstances—plausible explanations, whose very existence was a confession of the necessity of explanations, beside the hundred little hinting tongues of willing slander, were the more annoying that in the mass

of suggestions and intrigue there was not one definite fact to be combatted, not a suggestion whose ill nature could not be glibly explained away.

To make matters worse, Mrs. Owen Taberd, whose kindly worldliness would have found means to dissipate the intangible cloud, had sailed, before the first whisper had met her ear, to begin her customary round on the "other side."

Sally and Anne had been among those who waved her good-by from the dock. As they drove uptown afterward, they confessed to a lonesome feeling, even at the door of success, and with April fairly in the streets of New York. Mrs. Taberd had been for them a link from their past to the present, a reminder of home—a friend. They recognized with surprise—the only woman friend they had.

"This is such a beast of a place!" said Sally, dabbing her eyes with her handkerchief, "nobody cares whether you are alive or dead!"

"I suppose most big places are like that—the bigger, the most brutal. But are you sorry we came?"

"No," said Sally, promptly; then added, more slowly: "It isn't just what I thought it would be, but I'm not sorry—are you?"

Anne smiled and shook her head. "Not for a minute. I suppose people must have trouble everywhere, in every kind of life." She had a notebook on her knee, in which she was making a list of names for their impending *musicale*. "You haven't Mrs. Torry's name," commented Sally, peering over her sister's shoulder.

"No-o! Do we have to ask her! She was rather nasty at the Gifford's the other night, and in an under-bred way. Well, we'll put her down. Sally, what is the address of that man Mr. Murray brought here last week?"

"Oh, don't have him!"

"Why not? Mr. Murray asked if I would send him a card—"

"He said a few rather queer things to me once," Sally replied. "I pretended not to understand, but I did."

Anne ran her pencil through the

name. "If people could only think it possible to be witty without being nasty," she remarked. "Sally, are you dining out to-night?"

"I was, but I'm not—not with my present grouch. Why?"

"I was going to say, why don't we dine out together—by ourselves?"

"Where?" said Sally, brightening.

"The Blue Moon."

"Too crowded," Sally objected.

"I'll tell you—I've got to go to the manicure's. I'll drop you at the Moon on my way, and you can tell Wiggins we want one of the upstairs rooms—neither is engaged to-night. Then we can smoke and be comfortable."

It was with slightly inflated spirits that Sally pushed open the door under the swinging sign, and made her way through the deserted dining-room toward the butler's pantry. It was an unlikely hour for guests, early for luncheon, late for breakfast.

To her regret, she interrupted the bi-weekly quarrel of Wiggins and the *chef*, and spent fifteen minutes in calming them. In fact, the violence of the disagreement, and the lowering atmosphere, even after the storm was quelled, so disturbed her mind that she recalled the original errand on the threshold of departure.

"The front dining-room, mind, Wiggins," she flung over her shoulder in her high, sweet voice, "and set for two." She turned, and found herself face to face with Mrs. Gifford.

"Oh, I am so glad," said Sally, shaking hands warmly. She had colored brightly, not from any consciousness of significance in her words to Wiggins, but from fear of revealing her concealed identity. It seemed so entirely the obvious explanation of her order, that the two owners of the Blue Moon should thus reserve one of its dining-rooms for themselves, that she trembled lest Mrs. Gifford had instantly leaped to that conclusion.

She greeted Mrs. Flower with less enthusiasm. She stood by their table a few moments chatting, declining Leslie's invitation to join them. She was

intuitively aware that, while talking with one, the other watched her. She turned her back upon them with relief.

"Why should that woman make me uncomfortable?" she asked herself indignantly. "Mrs. Gifford usually dominates her, and Mrs. Gifford never makes me uncomfortable."

Anne drove on across town, absorbed in disquieting thoughts. Sedly White had not been in the house since his unhappy departure two weeks ago, nor did either he or Sally show any disposition for adjustment. Rather they displayed a tendency to plunge in opposite directions, Sally in society, Sedly in stocks. Sally, indeed, was developing a *sans gêne* that dismayed even the reckless Anne. She indulged herself in extravagant hats, lingerie of marvelous workmanship and fabulous price, until Anne cried out against bankruptcy. She engaged in furious flirtations with Brian Bourke, the poet; with a witty, well-married sculptor; with the lothario, Murray.

Sedly, hearing murmurs of her beauty on promiscuous tongues, began sending flowers to married women.

Anne had seen him at his broker's the week before, and remarked an added line in his forehead, and records of waking nights drawn blackly under his eyes. He had smiled incredulously at her attempt to compare Sally's state of mind with his own, and answered with an irrelevant remark, to the effect that "Am. Copper would be a good buy next week. If she liked, he would let her know when it was near bottom, and she could consider him her adviser as long as she wanted one."

Now this was the middle of the week, and no word yet. She did not think she wanted to buy Copper, but she would go down to the office and see Sedly. She might find him more amenable to reason, now, concerning Sally. She did not admit that she felt a sudden craving for the atmosphere of the office where the green coupons crawled up and down the face of the walls.

She felt the need of stimulant against a worry, more formless, but even more insistent than the first.

She had expected that after that night when she and Clayton Gordon had discarded furtiveness, and suddenly become such good friends, that they would continue in that friendship, that it would progress, to what end she did not designate. But certainly she had expected a difference. Instead, she found him suddenly retired to his first attitude, which her new feeling was obliged to face as stiffly as before. Why should it distress her? He was a man of moods, she knew. The sympathetic mood would return. Or, if it did not? He was quite as interesting in defense as attack. But why that voice and look when he said good-by two weeks ago?

So she tormented herself as her cab threaded the tangled streets that weave a web among the tower-like buildings. Into one of the tallest of these Anne directed her step. Whisked up fifteen stories in the elevator, she found the broker's office full of smoking, hatted men, lounging before an inactive board. In spite of the inactivity, she thought they looked expectant.

Sedly White was not there. He had stepped around the corner to see Mr. Murray, the broker told her. He was not expected back again that morning. Anne, her eye on Amalgamated Copper, that was making spasmodic starts, decided to pursue Sedly.

In the spacious offices of Murray & Pendleton she found the atmosphere less smoky, the occupants fewer, and of more opulent appearance. The boy who took her card returned at the heels of Mr. Murray himself, who was delighted to see her, shook hands a long time, and ushered her into his private office. He regretted very much that she had missed Mr. White—by five minutes. He believed Mr. White had gone to keep an appointment. Was there anything *he* could do for her? The insistent voice of the ticker was drumming up Anne's pulse, and Sedly himself had advised Copper. Still, for some reason, she did not want to transact business with Mr. Murray.

"If you are thinking of investing, Miss Hill," he said, leaning confidently

toward her, across his table, "I can give you a straight tip. I should hesitate in most cases," he continued, with a gleam of even teeth, "but Mr. White says your nerve is equal to a man's, and I should like you to have the benefit of the best tip I've had this year."

Anne would not have been a woman had she not felt the genial flattery.

"Amalgamated Copper," he said. "It is quoted as low as possible now. You'll be safe on ten-point margin, and I think I can promise you fifteen points' rise, and the whole thing pulled off before three o'clock."

"I'll do it," said Anne.

The financier nodded admiringly. "Let's see what's doing."

"Copper—eight—seven-eighths."

"There she goes—we're just in time," he said, leading the way to the outer office.

"Once started, it goes like lightning. We'll need quick guessing to get out."

"Copper six—seven and a quarter."

The drawl of the caller-out was the counterpart of the other man in the office across the street.

"Copper — eight — seven-eighths."

Anne sat down and watched the green tickets climbing under Amalgamated Copper with rising excitement. The group before the board augmented. Men began to buy Copper, calmly at first, wildly as it began to skip numbers, telephoning in the office, rushing out to borrow fifty in the hope of making five hundred.

Ten minutes before three the financier whispered over the back of Anne's chair: "Sell now."

Following an agonizing nine minutes, with Copper bobbing up and down like a cork, and Murray's tireless voice through the telephone, "Sell Copper—eighty-one—Copper eighty-one." Then with a gasp of relief she saw him at the window beckoning. As she passed into the office the caller drawled: "Market's closed."

"I am delighted, Miss Hill"—the financier ran a blotter lightly over the account—"to have been able to do you

this little turn. Oh, no, no! You must admit if the pecuniary benefit is only mine in part, the pleasure is wholly mine! I shall have the further pleasure of sending you a check to-morrow. I am convinced," he said, as he saw her to the elevator, "that Mr. White did not overestimate your gambling nerve."

Anne reached home much elated. Elation is a fair substitute for happiness. She found Sally in a similar state of mind, due to two causes; a spirited argument with Brian Bourke, about her altered dinner engagement, and the fact that she had heard and replied to Sedly's voice over the telephone.

"He wanted you, Anne, of course," she explained, "but I *think* he recognized my voice!" She chewed the end of her pen thoughtfully. She had completed the list of invitations for the *musicale*, and ordered the flowers.

"What kind?" Anne inquired.

"Roses," said Sally, a little guiltily.

"Orchids," said Anne, going over to the telephone.

"Orchids!"

"Amalgamated Copper," Anne replied. "Fifteen hundred dollars."

"Oh, Anne!" cried Sally. But this time she did not say "How awful!" but "did you see Sedly?"

"No, I missed him all around. At the office they told me he had gone over to Murray & Pendleton's, but he had left five minutes before I got there. So I bought Copper of Mr. Murray right there, and sold out just by the skin of my teeth."

Sally looked dubious. "I don't think Sedly would like that—buying of Mr. Murray," she said.

"Why?"

"He doesn't like him."

"He does business with him, and why not I? I thought you didn't care what Sedly thought."

"I don't," said Sally, hastily, "only I thought you did. I don't believe Clayton Gordon likes him, either."

"Sally, *do* hush! I'm trying to hear! Thorley's—yes, Thorley's."

Sally swept up the heap of invitations, and rang for Mimi.

CHAPTER XII.

"Is Miss Hill at home?"

"Madam, yes."

Mimi, the mouse, vanished through the rose *portières* with the card. Mrs. Flower looked after her with approval.

"I wish she were mine," she thought.

Leslie never approved of anything without appending that sentence.

From the gray green reception room where she sat, her eye took cognizance of a broad bowl of Russian violets on a background of silver pink—of the hyacinths in the deep window sills, blushing through the filmy curtains—then wandered back to the Louis Quinze table before which she sat.

It bore a litter of letters. She glanced curiously over them. She recognized Gordon's hand, and drew the note toward her. It was only a card of acceptance for the *musicale*. In pushing it back, a second equally familiar script caught her attention. She extracted it daintily from the pack, and held it between thumb and finger. It was a long envelope of the stiffish, watered paper that was the season's rage. The characters that addressed it to Miss Anne Hill were bold and flowing. They seemed to fascinate her.

She turned the envelope over in her fingers. It was slit roughly at the top. She compressed the edges gently till it gaped. What she saw inside suddenly put two sparks in her limpid eyes.

Her hand was on the note when a closing door made her drop it like a hot coal. She stood motionless, staring at the curtain, a smile ready on her lips.

The *portières* parted a little as Mimi's skirts brushed them, passing. Leslie snatched up the letter and pulled from its envelope a long slip of pinkish paper with the name of a bank on its official front—its blanks filled out to the effect that fifteen hundred dollars were payable to Anne Hill, and along the front of the check was scrawled "Henry Murray," in the same hand that had addressed the envelope.

Mrs. Flower, reading, and re-reading with narrowing eyes, smiled. Then she took the note, but in a flash thrust

it, with the check, back into the envelope, and turned unhastily toward the door, leaning back against the table, as Anne Hill came into the room.

"So glad, dear Miss Hill." She offered her hand languidly; with the other behind her, she flipped the letter back among its fellows. But the light still darted in her eyes. Anne regarded her with secret suspicion.

She had first put down her growing animosity to Leslie Flower as a purely personal motive, felt only in the presence of Clayton Gordon. But now she began to suspect Sally's violent prejudice well founded. She felt a fatal atmosphere about Leslie Flower. The two women, talking amiable amenities across the loves and graces that decorated the top of the Louis Quinze table, watched each other like cats. Leslie had purposely come early, that, in missing no one who might call, she could be pretty sure of seeing a certain one. Clayton Gordon came early in the hope of missing every one but his hostess. But it would have been a very keen student of expression who had detected in his face the unexpectedness of Leslie Flower's presence. The atmosphere was strained to snapping. Not that Leslie was so lacking in the sense of the dramatic that she did not enjoy the situation, but Anne and Gordon—the former unconsciously, the latter premeditatedly—were both eager to say something to one another that could not be said before a third person.

For Gordon, the dreamer, had for the first time in his life found a mystery that he did not enjoy—that, in short, he could not endure. On an impulse born of an intolerable sneer he had come determined to fathom it—how, he did not know.

But in the present oppressive atmosphere that impulse was smothered, and Anne, conscious of crossed undercurrents that she did not understand, turned with relief to the voluble entrance of Sally, towing Murray, the financier.

Mrs. Flower, notably elated, departed fifteen minutes afterward, taking Clayton Gordon with her. He chafing at

the escaped opportunity, furious at the appearance of Murray, whom he detested, cared little whether he went with Leslie or alone, so that he escaped. He heard not a word that she spoke all the way to Thirty-first Street, and looked only at the pavement.

When, with the departure of Murray, the sisters were alone, Anne drew from the heap of correspondence that had been tossed upon her desk to make room on the table for tea things, the note with the check. She looked at it long, her eyes seemed seeing through it; her foot beat the ground. "It's horribly crumpled," said Sally, glancing over her sister's shoulder. "You must scold Mimi. She's a curious person, and if she appropriates my gloves and garters, why not your check, and French leave?"

"I was a goose to leave it around," murmured Anne, as she closed the writing desk. "Did I tell you, Sally, that Herr Pachmann has promised to play for us?" They drifted into discussion and consultation over the *musicale* that was a short six days distant.

In view of the many boring musical functions that had been their lot in an unhappy past, they were determined that their own should at least entertain. So there was the "Pearl of Tokio," the exquisite Japanese singer, who had been drawing crowds on Broadway for thirty nights, and her dancing girls. And there was a Spanish *prima donna* with a voice of honey and gold; a Frenchman of Canada, singer of *chansons* and *voyageur* songs that brought the tears, and, finally, a German virtuoso.

"The programme seems a little mixed," said Anne, dubiously, "but everything is good in itself, and the combination is surprising, and that is what these people want."

The acceptances had already begun to come in—so far refusals were absent.

On Saturday afternoon had Mrs. Flower so singularly interested herself in their finances. On Monday morning their eyes were greeted by half a dozen regrets, one from Mrs. Gifford, which caused Anne to knit her brows.

"Why," the wrathful Sally ex-

claimed, "she got Señora Colomarini for us herself—and was so interested."

"I have a feeling," said Anne, slowly, "that there is something going on that we don't know anything about."

"Anne, you make me creep," Sally protested.

Anne continued reading from the notes.

"Mrs. Talbot declines cards with regrets. And only the other day she was anxious for me to call her 'Ethel.'"

"But what is it?" Sally insisted. "I could understand Mrs. Flower and that Torry woman type—they're cats—but not Mrs. Talbot and Mrs. Gifford! What *have* we done?"

"Nothing that I know of," replied Anne, laying down the notes, "except try to live, and work as we want to. Don't be worried, little sister; we may know more about it after Thursday night. I have a premonition of happenings." She spoke with assumed lightness.

She was more disturbed than she would admit, but she knew Sally had a very absorbing trouble of her own. She feared that some of her sister's innocent, but reckless, escapades had given gossip a chink for foothold. This was the only explanation she could find for an indefinite change in the manner of some of the men during the last two weeks.

But a feeling more acute than reason whispered a deeper cause. Anne was excellent material for a clairvoyant. She both feared, and was impatient, for the next development in the mystery she anticipated.

In spite of her reticence, her feeling communicated itself to Sally, and by Thursday night both were in a state of high nervous excitement. The *musical* was a late affair; at ten o'clock the drawing-room, with its clusters of pink and violet orchids, and rows of gleaming candles, was empty. Sally, depressed by the number of regrets, was seized with a horrid doubt that she dared not breathe. Suppose no one came? But on the heels of her fear the first of the guests were ushered in. The room filled rapidly. In the increas-

ing gathering were persons, brilliant and desirable, but they were all men. Sally and Anne marked with dismay the overwhelming masculine majority. In this clique the preponderance of men to women was as three to two, but a scant dozen of *décolleté* among fifty dress coats was truly an awful fact to face. It was made worse by the quality of the few women, which was balanced between the vapid nobodies, and somebodies notable in undesirable ways. Anne saw several whom she knew had not been asked, two whom she had never seen before, and later, after a little champagne, that she never wished to see again.

Mrs. Torry introduced the least offensive as a friend she had taken the liberty of bringing; a liberty that Anne's unbending head and frigid smile acknowledged. The other avoided introduction, and remained in a circle of men, an unmodulated voice, rasping through the plaintive wail of the *chanson*, and the throbbing song of the gypsy *prima donna*.

Sally and Anne dared not look at one another.

Mrs. Flower came in very late with a correct and bloodless snob in tow, who condescended to smile upon Anne. She hardly saw him. She felt as though a cord were slowly tightening about her throat. She had made sure that, at the worst, Clayton Gordon would come with Leslie Flower. Now it was after midnight, and he had not come. She had had his acceptance that miserable Saturday. Her eyes ached with looking for him among the faces that surrounded her "hateful faces," she thought with a wave of passionate despair. The financier came to introduce his friend—to whom Anne had not sent a card.

She felt for the first time a positive dislike of this unctuous individual. But later in the evening, when the artists were giving informal renderings at personal request, she could not well escape his plea for a few minutes—all to himself, he said. He knew she would pardon one word of business to-night, since to-morrow might prove too

late. Anne, vaguely remembering Copper, established herself in the recessed window seat in the reception-room.

There Leslie Flower found her, when she came to say good-night. Found her alone, white and frozen. She offered three fingers, and hoped Mrs. Flower had enjoyed herself. There was a metallic quality in the voice that alarmed the silky Leslie.

She was glad to escape into the more genial atmosphere of the sharp April morning.

The crowd was thinning. Anne, moving and speaking like a somnambulist, noticed only that Sally, much flushed, and with irregularly rising bosom, was evidently fighting down some strong emotion, that manifested itself in a burst, as the elevator descended with the last guest. She wheeled upon her sister.

"Anne," she cried, "are we going crazy?"

And Anne, standing stiffly in the middle of the room, replied: "I don't know."

She was rousing slowly from her stupefaction to a white rage. She had had a blow that night that had been a revelation. "But why, why?" she asked herself.

What had she done to invite such a thing? What had they asked of the world, but to live by themselves and work? Had the world thrust itself upon them—for this? To slander, to wound? Why—she thought fiercely—was there such injustice abroad under the sun? Was there no one—not one, to come forward and explain this hideous circumstance? It enveloped her like a fog, with neither warp nor woof—only obscurity!

She paced up and down the room like a wild creature. Sally, far beyond tears, watched her dumbly.

Morning found them still in their evening gowns. Anne, pushing open the curtains, was shocked to see the sun. They hurried, fearful of discovery of the fact of their vigil to the watchful Mimi.

"And remember, Sally," said Anne,

from the bathroom, where she was recovering her wrecked complexion with ammonia and hard rubbing, "whatever is coming, we must keep up a good front, and die game. But," she added, pinning up her heavy coils of hair, "we'll make a bold play to plumb this mystery somewhere."

"It's that Flower cat that has made the mischief," Sally declared. They talked it over at breakfast, and decided that now they were on the scent of a definite scandal, it would not be difficult to run it down. Sally was sick at heart, wondering what Sedly had heard. Anne, with full intention of finding out, went downtown immediately after breakfast.

Getting into a crowded Broadway car, a tall, gray-haired man arose to give her his seat. She recognized him with a start.

"Good-morning, Miss Hill."

Swinging on the strap, he stood above her, slightly stooping his height, and they talked on indifferent topics. Neither mentioned his absence from the *musical*. There was a distance in his manner that struck at her heart. She was pale to the lips when she got out of the car at Wall Street.

In the broker's office she found Sedly White, radiantly glad to see her.

"You look done, somehow," he said.

"A big affair last night," she answered; "and you look better. Have you been resting?"

"Out of town for ten days. I was pretty rocky—wanted a steady nerve for the big deal this week."

"What's that?"

"It's Saint Paul. They're going to do great things with it."

"I think I'll invest in it."

"Are you fit?" asked Sedly, with a keen look.

"I never felt more like it in my life."

"Then don't. Never gamble when you especially want to. Miss Hill, is anything wrong?"

"No, no, not a thing," Anne answered. So he knew nothing. How glad Sally would be—but he would find out—she would better give him an

inking—no, she could not. Sally would never forgive her.

"I think I shall buy, anyway," she said, decidedly. "When are you going in?"

"Now's the time if you must, but don't buy, sell and go short. I'm short now, and I'm selling more."

Anne, ready for any venture, the more hazardous the better, sold Saint Paul heavily, and at the same time bought M. O. P. for a quick turn, which, unfortunately, was in the wrong direction.

"My luck has turned," she told herself bitterly, for, like all gamblers, she was superstitious. She met Sally at the Blue Moon by arrangement.

For several days past there had been muttering in the corps of waiters, who, however immaculate may have been their service and livery, were no more admirable behind scenes than a tribe of chophouse ravens.

"We can raise their wages, I suppose," said Anne, wearily, "but then we'll have to do the same for Wiggins and cook. We can't afford that. Our bills are very heavy. I've a lot of money in Saint Paul, and I shan't shorten the hours."

"But suppose they strike?" said Sally.

"Let them," said Anne, savagely. "I don't care what happens! Are you going to the Giffords to-night with me?"

"There?"

"Why not? We had her cards two weeks ago, and I will not plead guilty until I know what we've done to displease these excellent people." She did not attempt to deceive herself as to the real object of her determination. Nothing in the world could have braced her to the ordeal she foresaw, but the hope of meeting Gordon.

However, the ordeal was not so sore as she had imagined it, for though Mrs. Gifford was stiff, there were many new people in the crowded studio who were more than willing to meet the distinguished young woman with the long, gray eyes. Gordon was not there, but she heard more than one comment on the suddenness of his departure abroad.

Only back two or three months, and off again. Mrs. Torry considered it exceedingly uncomplimentary. Mrs. Flower, looking at Anne out of the corners of her eyes, replied that, without doubt, many found it so.

Sally, torn between pity of her sister's white face, and her own agonized doubt of how Sedly White's attitude compared to that of society at large, spent a wakeful night, hearing Anne's step pacing the drawing-room interminably. She had refrained from asking any questions concerning Sedly, and Anne, in her preoccupation, had neglected to mention his absence from town. Sally's mind was relieved later on the subject, for Anne saw him often, as she spent more and more frequent mornings in the broker's. She began plunging wildly. In vain Sedly remonstrated. She had admitted to herself at last, that with Gordon's departure for Europe she had lost all that her life was building on. She threw discretion to the winds. She lost heavily, double what she made; but hoping for a big gain still held Saint Paul. Her spirits fluctuated wildly with the coupons. Sedly wondered while he watched her.

"A man is the only thing that can make a woman act like that," he told himself. And with a pang of self-accusation and remorse he thought of Sally.

CHAPTER XIII.

Clayton Gordon was to sail on the first of May. Anne had waited through waning April, first in the certainty, then in the hope, that he would at least come to bid them farewell. In the evening of the twenty-eighth she had reached at her last opportunity of seeing him.

"Sally," she said, "are you going to Mrs. Flower's reception to-night?"

"I am if you are, but suppose Murray is there?"

"Don't see him. The more we can shut our eyes, the better for us." Anne drew in her lips.

"Well," said Sally, rising from the table, "I can't stand much more from

the Flower without being taken up for assault and battery. If Mrs. Taberd were only here——"

"Oh, what does any one matter?" said Anne, flinging dresses from her wardrobe upon the bed. She began to dress with a sort of breathless deliberation. Sally, contrary to her wont, flung into her clothes, so that she was clad and ready for her cloak when Mimi began to dress Anne's hair.

"Tr-r-ring."

Sally hurried to the telephone. Anne heard her voice like a meaningless sound, her thoughts away on a distant track. But the sudden reflection of her sister's face in the mirror, beside her own, brought her attention.

"The Blue Moon," said Sally, aghast. "It's struck."

Anne stood—the brush poised in her hand.

"The waiters and both cooks," Sally rushed on, "and I *think*, from Wiggins' voice, that he is on a private strike of his own. We must rush!"

The change in Anne's face was almost a convulsion. When all one's thought, hope and fear are flowing in one direction they are not wrenched into another channel without some anguish.

"I mean," said Sally, "that I will go right over."

"Do you suppose I will let you go alone?" Anne replied, coldly.

"Why not? They can't hurt me, can they? And one of us *must* go to Mrs. Flower's. You know, Anne," she was pinning on her hat with trembling fingers, "we can't show ourselves beaten."

"Everything is against us, why shouldn't we be beaten?" Anne answered. "We haven't time to change now; you are ready?"

"You must go to Mrs. Flower's, if only for fifteen minutes. Then join me at the Moon afterward."

Anne, tacitly recognizing her sister's understanding of the real motive that took her to the reception, submitted to the argument. For the second time in their metropolitan career, Sally found herself a leader in the field of action.

She drove rapidly, her thoughts thrashing in her head. As she sprang out of the hansom at the door of the restaurant, she saw two of the immaculate waiters lounging rather impertinently in the doorway. They did not move as she approached them.

"What are you doing here?" she demanded, in a voice far more valiant than the feeling it covered.

"We're lookin' for our wages, we are," replied the least sulky of the two.

"Come inside," said Sally, leading the way into the dining-room. Here, among disordered tables, knots of liveries talked in loosened voices. Before the fireplace, back to the room, wrapped in magnificent disdain, and ostensibly absorbed in a newspaper, sat the inimitable Wiggins.

Upon Sally's entrance he arose, and bowed courteously. The others glanced over their shoulders, stared, turned again and whispered. She stopped in the middle of the room.

"Please come into the kitchen," she said. They followed her whence the rancorous voice of the *chef* was evidently haranguing an audience. Her appearance startled the kitchen contingent into silence.

An overwrought courage possessed her. The gathering miseries of the past month had left her a calm desperation devoid of temper. She faced them quietly.

"Come, what is all this about?" she said.

A confused, muttering arose from which a single voice lifted itself, the voice of the man who had answered her at the door.

"We don't think fifty dollars is wages for men in a small place like this."

"You're takin' in a fly lot of money, and we ain't gettin' our share," said a second voice near the door.

"You shut your face," growled the first speaker, "am I talkin' or ain't I?"

He turned to Sally with a change of manner.

"What we want, miss, is good wages, and, and——" His eye met the cold regard of Wiggins, but his falterings

were instantly submerged in the resonant phrases of the *chef*.

"Ze *money*, mademoiselle—what do I care! But behol! I am not good enough for that Wiggins—that pig—that fish! Bah! Am I *canaille* that he should say 'come here!' 'go there!'" Mademoiselle, have I not serve in the Hotel Ritz in Paris, an' this *camel*, he tell me how to make the sauce piquant!"

He puffed for breath, and Wiggins, who had waited this opportunity, slid smoothly into the argument.

"It's 'ard to see, miss, 'ow any gentleman can 'ope for better with the like of these. It's Mr. Wiggins 'ere, an' it's Mr. Wiggins there; an' when they gets their orders they doesn't like 'em. As for *that*'—he indicated the empurpled *chef*—"I 'opes I knows my business, and I 'opes I knows my place, the which some people doesn't." His fishy eye fastened on the swelling Frenchman.

"An' me, to me, mademoiselle! *Sacré!* Hear him. Why have I endure for so long! Only to remain in the service of mademoiselle!"

"What's that got to do with this business?" interrupted the chafing ring-leader of the waiters. "Wages is what we want, an' that there *butler* as he calls himself, thrown out. Tén dollars' raise, an' kick that fellow out, an' we'll go to work. If you don't, why"—there was an eloquent pause, broken by Sally.

"Your wages," she said, "are what the first-class places pay! Your hours, the regular thing. I give Mr. Wiggins his directions. You are to take your orders from him."

"Does that mean he stays?"

"It does. Now, immediately set the dining-room in order, and be ready to serve whoever comes in." She was quaking for fear the first of the theatre crowd would arrive while the strike was in force, and the secret of the Blue Moon be discovered.

A threatening growl of voices began among the servants; and again the ring-leader's was audible above them.

"No, we don't serve one step—nor we don't close the shop all night," he declared, doggedly. "On them terms, it stays wide open."

Sally and the strikers faced each other in a dead silence in which the squeak of the door of the butler's pantry was distinctly audible. A voice said "Wiggins." The butler recognized the voice, but hesitated. Sally, also recognizing it, pushed open the door instantly. A man in an opera cloak stood on the threshold. He stood a minute, then stepped inside.

"Good-evening, Miss Hill."

"Mr. White," said Sally, faintly.

"Over here," he said, and as they stood apart in the butler's pantry: "What's up?"

She told him in short, incoherent sentences.

"Wouldn't budge, would they?" he meditated, with lowering brow and protruding chin. "You must discharge 'em."

"But—but," Sally faltered, "where'll we get any more—like these?"

"You can't. All you want are substitutes till these come around. But you'll have a crowd in here if you keep open ten minutes later, and you may be seen."

"But suppose they wouldn't go when I discharge them?"

"They will, too quick, when I'm here. Wait!"

He disappeared into the dining-room where a glossy clubman sat at one of the disordered tables, screwing a monocle into his eye, and looking exceedingly amused. Sally's sweet, but high-pitched, voice had not escaped him.

"You don't dine at this joint to-night, my boy," said Sedly, firmly.

"Don't I come into the game?"

"No, you get out, and you keep an all-fired still tongue in your head. See you later."

"You know *me*," replied he of the monocle, significantly, and passed out, regretful, in the direction of his club.

Sedly, returning kitchenward, found Sally paying wages to a crestfallen crew. But his keen eye detected still the element of rebellion, and he was not surprised at the hesitation that followed Sally's dismissal of them.

"Ten dollars' raise," began the leader.

"Ten dollars nothing!" Sedly's un-

wavering eyes and set jaw were a few inches from the man's face. "If you don't get out instantly I'll have Sergt. Casy and his men in here and lift you out. *Move*, now! And," he added, to the dispersing crowd, "if I catch any of you on this street to-night, I'll have you run in for vagrancy. Here, you!" He detained the ringleader by his sleeve.

"Get into the front of this shop and close her up lively!" The man obeyed without a word.

Sedly took the telephone. He rang up several calls, and conversed endlessly in strange languages, in which she caught the recurring phrase "Quick call"—"non-union men"—"good job."

She leaned back against the sideboard and watched the wide sweep of his shoulders, under his voluminous coat, the short, square-set neck. All her sight and sense seemed concentrated on the back of the man who stood at the telephone. She saw him hang up the receiver, and felt a wild impulse to run.

"Can I do anything more?" he began, turning, and saw her, wide-eyed, staring at him.

"No, thank you, you've been very kind. I—I don't know what I should have done without you." The words suddenly brought back their first meeting, and again, in a flash, she saw the dreary month behind her wherein she had not seen him, and all the months to come in which she should not see him. It was too much! She wept not audibly, but silently, helplessly, with many tears and a piteous mouth.

At the sight of which Sedly stared a moment in agony; and then being bereft of sense, and therefore suddenly made wise above his kind, he comforted her in the one way it is possible to comfort woman.

"There, there, sweet," he said, and kissed the bright brown head in the hollow of his shoulder.

They had explained nothing—they had forgotten there was anything to explain. Indeed, they had forgotten where they were till Wiggins, the discreet, passing the half-open door of the

butler's pantry, kicked it gently to with his toe. Then Sally, with furious blushes, endeavored to extricate herself, but the triumphant Sedly only looked and laughed.

"For the first time," he said, "I fully appreciate Wiggins."

CHAPTER XIV.

After the door had closed on Sally, Anne sat for a space inert, staring before her at the floor. Then she lifted her head with a jerk, and saw her face in the glass. Was this indeed her own, sallow, hollow-cheeked, thin-lipped, dull-eyed. Hideous! Did this woman hope to win the man she loved? No—her beauty, she must keep it for one night more! Only one night!

She sprang to her feet.

Mimi ran to her bidding. She brought in four candlesticks from the drawing-room, and set them, blazing, on her mistress' dressing table. Between their flaring tongues Anne's face peered into the face of the mirror. Clayton Gordon never studied a picture as intently as she studied her glass.

While Mimi's deft fingers rearranged her dark hair, Anne's long, trembling fingers darted among the ivory-topped boxes before her, whitening with sweeps of the powder puff the black circles under her eyes, smoothing out the tense line from nostril to mouth, touching delicately with rouge her wax-white cheeks, and recrimsoning her lips. Her eyes gleamed like gems, but of what was before her she saw only a shadowy semblance. The desperate energy of her motions was automatic.

She dismissed gown after gown with an impatient shake of the head.

"What is it?" she said, sharply, to the patient Mimi, hesitating at her elbow.

"No more, madam."

Anne turned, and ran her eye swiftly over the gorgeous heap on the bed, and drew out one, color of the heart of fire.

Mimi, with eyes bewitched, laced her mistress into this glowing garment, slipped the string of opals over her

head, gave her the rings, of which all but the opals were rejected, and finally quenched her in the snow of a long, white cloak. Then she watched her into the elevator.

The very cabby stared at Miss Hill as she crossed the sidewalk.

She hesitated an instant on the threshold of Leslie Flower's small, exquisite drawing-room; then swept in with a sort of insolent joy at the unanimity with which heads turned in her direction. She saw, among those she had called her friends, strange faces; interested, admiring, ever eager. She looked through them, beyond them. Clayton Gordon was not there. Perhaps she was early. She had lost count of time. She felt he must come; meanwhile she must get through the interval somehow.

Mrs. Flower's manner glanced harmlessly from the armor of her indifference. She sat in a semicircle of men, bitterly defiant of the circumspect recognition of the women. She looked up swiftly upon the entrance of two new arrivals, and saw Murray, and a stranger.

"You are late," she heard Mrs. Flower's soft voice exclaiming and there was a tightening at her heart. Minutes dragged themselves interminably. The fire of her mood was subsiding. She had staked high on this throw, pride and delicacy, and the intuition of the woman to be pursued, and now she felt the prize not worth the price. She loathed Gordon. She loathed herself. She loathed the purring women who, looking at her askance, envied her her dress; she despised the fatuous flatteries of the men about her. She exercised all her ingenuity to rid herself of them, one by one. She promised herself not to endure it a moment longer, but a power above her volition held her in her place, with her eyes on the door.

Finally, having only one admirer left, and he of the most innocuous type, she sent him in quest of a glass of water. In the interval of his absence she withdrew into a half-lit corner, retired from the reception-room, where she hoped she could not be found.

Leaning back among the cushions, she closed her eyes. Her head felt bursting, her pulses beat like drums. For a moment she heard only a rushing in her ears. Then suddenly it was split by a voice speaking near her. She heard it first as a familiar sound that stirred unpleasant memories. Then she recognized it as that of Murray, the financier. She sat motionless, secure in the protection of the half-drawn *portière*, waiting the opportunity of a quiet retreat, when a word arrested her attention.

"Saint Paul." An unfamiliar voice pronounced it.

"Saint Paul?" who—what was Saint Paul? Oh, yes, she had sold it short. And what was Murray saying? She could barely catch the words. "Yes, everybody is selling Saint Paul short, but, on the inside, Saint Paul will be way up out of sight to-morrow morning—going to squeeze the shorts."

Anne's eyes opened with a spring. She sat up, leaning forward cautiously, and peered around the *portière* into the library. It was empty save for the two men immediately on the other side of the curtain, and back to her. She slid softly to the far end of the divan, and, with safe escape hinged on the turn of a head, stepped noiselessly along by the far wall, stood an instant in the last sweep of curtain that hid the folding doors, then, like a flash, whipped around into the light of the first drawing-room. In passing, her sweeping skirt struck and made to jangle the brass lamp, but when the two men in the library had turned, she was far in the crowd, making her way toward her hostess.

She did not notice Leslie's suspended fingers. She was not conscious of an interval between the dressing-room and the street. She came to herself when she saw her cabby crowding into the backing, pushing line along the curb.

"The Warwick—drive fast!" she said, as she sprang into the hansom.

Every consideration was swallowed up in the significance of Murray's words, "They're going to squeeze the shorts." The rattling wheels repeated the sentence endlessly. Sedly had told

her he was short a large amount of Saint Paul; she dared not think how much she herself had sold. She must get to him immediately to save them both.

The lights of the Players' Club flashed in upon her, whirling past. The cab drew up at the corner in front of the bachelor apartment Warwick.

The hallboy stared with curious impertinence at the beautiful, wonderfully gowned woman, but ran at her imperious order. She paced up and down the marble hall in front of the elevators. Once the deep silence of the house was broken by the strokes of a distant clock. She counted twelve. Was that boy never coming back? Suppose Sedly should be out. She thought it probable! What could be done then?

Then the ropes beyond the wrought-iron door began to slide rapidly, she saw the car dropping down the shaft, the door slid back, and Sedly White stepped out, hat in hand. An exclamation of relief escaped Anne's lips.

"What's wrong?" Sedly asked, quickly, realizing her wild eyes and strange attire. "Is any one ill—Sally

"No, no," she said, hurriedly. "It's you—it's me! Oh, send that boy away!"

Sedly turned with a gesture, and the elevator shot upward.

"It's Saint Paul," said Anne. "They're going to squeeze the shorts." She repeated the sentence mechanically. "Murray—at Mrs. Flower's—they were in the library—I was behind the curtain! They're going to put it way up—right away—to-morrow morning! We must get out!"

"Well, I'm mighty glad you overheard 'em," replied Sedly, calmly. "Murray knows what he's talking about. Getting out is always easy—if you know when. All we'll have to do is to be there to-morrow morning when the market opens. Come, let's get out of this."

Sedly White, keenly alive to the fact that inmates of the bachelor apartment might be expected at any moment, led

her toward the door. It occurred to him that her sudden information of the approaching "squeeze" did not entirely account for the incoherence of her manner. As they passed out into the fresh night air they failed to notice a tall man crossing from the shadow of the park palings into the flicker of the light on the opposite corner.

"I am going to see you home if you don't mind," he said, as they descended the long steps.

"Why, I should like——" Anne began, then glancing involuntarily up the street, the sentence halted on her tongue. Not a yard from her she saw the tall figure and gray hair of Clayton Gordon. She saw the habitually mobile features set like stone—his eyes seemed to be looking through her. He raised his hat, and inclined his head slightly, but without looking at her, and passed on down the street.

Anne stood stock-still in the middle of the sidewalk, turning first her head, then her whole body in the direction of his striding form. She saw him turn in, between the lights of the "Players." A sudden desperate weakness assailed her. She felt her knees give under her. Then a strong arm was thrust through hers, and Sedly White almost lifted her into the cab. He stood for a moment leaning in the door to assure himself she was not going to faint.

"Meet me at the broker's at nine, to-morrow," he said, "and don't worry." Everything will be all right."

She tried to thank him, but her tongue refused words. She gave him her hand. He gave it a little, friendly pressure, and closed the door. She flung herself back in the cab.

He turned on his heel; stood for a moment looking down the street.

"So that's it," he thought. "That's the man. The ass!" He took a step forward, stood still, walked rapidly toward the club.

"Mr. Gordon here, Charlie?" he asked the doorkeeper.

"Just come in, sir."

Sedly went into the bar. His instincts of men were fine. Before his order had left his lips, his eyes—keen to

pick a face in a crowd—had singled out the painter at the other end of the bar. Gordon had just set down an empty glass, and called for another. His voice was steady—casual, but the hand holding the glass shook.

Sedly stepped up to him.

"Ah, good-evening, White."

Sedly paid no attention to the bare civility with which Gordon returned his greeting.

"I'd like to see you alone for five minutes," he said.

Gordon looked attentively at the siphons on the shelf opposite, looked coldly into Sedly's eyes, put down his glass, and followed him out of the bar. They passed upstairs, through billiard-room, through smoking-room, both more or less occupied, into the deserted library.

Gordon stood stiffly in the middle of the room. The drop-light, drawn low over the broad table, threw unnatural shadows upward, athwart his face.

Sedly White hesitated an instant. This man would be difficult to deal with. Then he launched fearlessly into words.

"Your manner just now, Mr. Gordon, was not satisfactory. As Miss Hill's oldest friend, I have a right to demand an apology on her behalf."

"I don't care to discuss women," Gordon replied, his eyes on the door.

"You will, though," said Sedly, "if the woman happens to be my friend—and was yours, two minutes ago!"

Gordon's hand made a polite disclaimer.

"Especially when she has placed herself in an equivocal position on my account."

"Without doubt—of course." Gordon's voice was a polite acceptance of the proper excuse in the case. "But you drag before me a matter in no way my affair. If I have failed in courtesy —"

"Oh, courtesy be damned! You have failed to understand the situation. Miss Hill has invested very heavily in a stock at my advice. She overheard tonight that that stock was to be manipulated, put way up, first thing to-morrow morning. She knew I was in it even

deeper than she, and, like the good friend that she is, she came right to me, without stopping to think. A rash thing to do; but by what right do you allow yourself to imply a suspicion against a woman of her character?"

Gordon, who had presented a cold profile to Sedly's monologue, now wheeled full upon him. His face was distorted through the disguising shadows.

"Her character! My God! her character! Oh, let's not go into this! I can't discuss it!"

Blank surprise succeeded anger in Sedly's face. For a moment he looked at Gordon in attentive silence.

"There's more in this than I reckoned on," he said, slowly. "I am going to ask you to explain. I think you'll have to know why I have a right to hear. I am going to marry Sara Hill."

Surprise and incredulity relaxed the rigidity of Gordon's face. Mechanically he half extended his hand.

"Why, I——" he began. His hand fell on the table. "It's impossible you haven't heard something," he said. "You must know——"

"I don't know what you're talking about. I've been out of town. I don't go your social pace, anyhow. There seems to have been talk about these two girls. If it's anything worse than usual (and it looks that way when a man believes it), why, it's up to me to know what it is. I won't stand for it, and you can give me the chance to clear it up. There's always talk about independent women with looks and money."

"Money—that's the point! They haven't any money."

"They haven't—any—money! Who says so?"

Gordon walked to the end of the table, stood an instant, turned, and almost with a lurch leaned forward, his clinched fists on the table. Deep lines, and strong muscles broke through the fine indifference of his face. His voice was as strange to Sedly as his appearance.

"It's an ugly business all through," he said, "but you *have* a right to know! I hope to God you can put a different

light on the matter. They have no money. A woman, an old friend of their family, let that out in good faith. She, and their people, believe they are 'china painting,' or some such absurdity.

"China painting—and carriages! China painting—and orchids! Of course there was talk! But that is not all. She was spied upon. I think I said it was an ugly business. There was something found—something seen, in her rooms; in fact, money. *Signed* money. Do you want any more?"

"Yes. I want the signature."

"Henry Murray!"

A great relief lighted Sedly's face. He laughed. There was more of nerves than mirth in his laughter.

"Oh, Murray," he said, "of course, of course. She bought Copper of him. I was in the office ten minutes later. She'd gone there looking for me, and she'd just pulled off fifteen hundred dollars on his tip, and the ass sent her his personal check. We know him—he's more knave than fool, though. They've bought stocks off and on on my advice, you know, and once or twice had tremendous luck."

"But without capital——"

"Oh, the proceeds from their b——" He swallowed. "Hold on—I'm forgetting! By George, I never thought of that!" His face was a mixture of amusement and distress.

"It's all right," he said, speaking to the puzzled trouble in Gordon's face. "It's true they had only a very little money when they came down here. They've made it since. But that is their secret. Some family nonsense made it so. I had it from them by accident—I gave my word. You'll have to ask them."

"It is impossible! I can't ask her—not after what has happened. Don't you see what a cad I'd be to ask her—after this?"

"You can't ask *her*?" repeated Sedly, with a brightening eye, and a hardly perceptible accent on the final word. "That is what you must do. That is the only thing you can do to square her. Do you suppose either of these women

know anything of this? It is the only thing you can do to square yourself."

"You're the man to square them with their world. They trust you—you have the facts. Squaring myself's beside the question. I can't. What right have I to expect her to *receive* me, and as for listening to me——"

"Of course," said Sedly, recalling Anne's face as he last saw it, "of course the circumstances are not my business. But as for listening to you, I think she might."

CHAPTER XV.

Caprice is sufficient cause to woman for a departure from the routine of daily comfort. In man, such departure means a crisis.

Clayton Gordon did not go to his rooms that night.

Between one and two he let himself into the stuffy, blind upper hall of the Eastwood, on Forty-second Street. Groping in the dark, he fitted the key to the familiar lock, and opened the door on the half light of his studio. Down its dim length a white strip of moonlight pricked out the parts of objects in its path.

The faint illumination from the raw, gray square of skylight made mottling of the tapestries, and brought out with unreasonable distinctness the middle heights, a plane of colorless form wavering between the shadows of floor and ceiling. The canvasses stared from their easels, a pale audience. He felt himself a stranger in this place peopled with shadows and shapes to which night had lent presence and personality. He saw the room grotesque, unreal, monstrous. He struck a match, lit a candle.

Its little hectic circle of light put out the conflict of the shadows, made a small space where all was clear and real. From the edge of it a figure of Astarte looked out impassively upon him, as she had watched for ten years. He felt that she had been waiting all the time for this—to see him run into a bag's end. He pushed her out of the circle of light. Something jingled from her pedestal. He turned it in his fin-

gers, a gaudy little button, the decoration of the Bey of Tunis.

He remembered the fat little man had been pleased with his portraits—as the judges of the *salon* had been pleased eight years before; and between the first medal and the decoration of Tunis, there had been many others.

Well, he had pleased people. He had tried to please them so successfully he had grown to believe that, in so doing, he had pleased himself. When he was a student in the old atelier, there had been a lot of talk about the joy of work for work's sake. It had come down to a string of coins on ribbons and a gallery of dreams that he had not painted.

He asked himself if all these dreams were pictures—if one was not a man's life, adapted by some devilish design, to a popular theme, an effective arrangement of background and detail—a picturesque costume—a telling pose.

He threw the decoration on the table. He fingered the marble "Ganymede," the paperweight that French woman in Cyprus had given him, took up a Spanish knife and held the hilt to the light. The crust of opals brought Mexico to him, the eyes of his Spanish model. She had the limbs of a bronze! How he had loved the line of her shoulder, the turn of her arm. He had believed that men loved only arms, and faces, and attitudes until—when had he not believed it? To-night?

He grasped at that as something certain—that he no longer believed his own well-arranged sophistry. The ten comfortable years had fallen from him, and left him face to face with his youth, and something greater than youth. Something as formless, as unreal, as mysterious as the room beyond the little circle of candlelight.

He turned from it to the white square of the window through which fell the strip of moonlight that crept from him, up the floor. Halfway across the room he collided sharply with an unseen object—the French easel he himself had wheeled out from its accustomed place and forgotten.

After all, candlelight was safe. With groping hands he found the divan,

threw himself upon it, and watched the candle burning itself out on the table, and the moonlight creeping out of the window.

His life had been secure, full of pleasant objects, lit with many candles. Now, suddenly, he desired the moonlight in the window. He had not lived, and he desired life. But what was life? Provoking eyes and imperious ways? A woman? Or a woman and all the other things—belief, aspiration, the pride of challenge and endeavor of youth to circumstance? But what had bred in him the desire of these things? What would they be without her? It all narrowed down to that—the woman.

The woman, that all the snug arrangements of his life had cried out against; the woman that the material standards of his world had condemned without a hearing; the woman that his egotism had persistently put from him—he must have her—and he had lost his chance!

He had always known that it would come to this, and he had shut his mind against it. She belonged to him, and he had lost her! Through his own unbelief he had lost her—she who belonged to him! There was not an impatient lift of head, a reckless word of hers, a flash of the long, gray eyes that was not nearer, more real to him that moment than the clear, little, usual objects in the candlelight.

He felt, suffering dumbly, in a blind rage with the things of life—the piece of clockwork—the man he had been!

He put out the candle. The figure of Astarte watched him impassively in the harsh light of a cold dawn. The moonlight had crept out of the window. The room was clearly defined, unspeakably commonplace. He felt it the tangible expression of what his life must be without her. He felt quite sure that it was not sufferable. She was his. Every new turn in their knowledge of each other marked her his. It was all clear, now. How slight a thing had held them apart. It had looked a wall, it was an unreality, that he had called life, a mere fabric to be torn aside. Surely *she* must see that now—must understand.

As day broadened, he grew impatient of time. He must see her at once—must sweep away at one bold stroke the barriers of months. He did not notice the quiet of the unwonted hour in which he drove to his rooms. His mind outstripped his actions. While he was changing from evening clothes, he saw himself already in the street. Breakfasting in the café, he seemed already in her drawing-room, and when at ten o'clock the discreet Mimi had ushered him into the reception-room, as he heard the rustle of approaching skirts, his fancy saw Anne stand between the *portières*.

It was an instant before he could adjust his mind to recognize that the glinting brown eyes into which he was looking were Sally's.

"Good-morning," she said, with slightly changing color. She did not sit, in fact, had her hat on, and her gloves in her hand. There was a nervous stiffness in her manner.

He found himself saying: "This is an unconscionable hour."

"Oh, you are not the first. We are early this morning. Mr. White has been here——"

Then Sedly White had told her. That accounted for her manner.

"He and Anne have gone to the broker's," she continued. "I'm just flitting." She began drawing on her gloves.

"Oh, don't let me keep you."

"I can't do that," said Sally, with artful candor. "You can't think what a time we've been having at the Blue Moon."

"Yes?" he said, with vague politeness.

"We own it, you know. I'm not sure that we've mentioned it before——"

His light walking-stick fell to the floor with a clatter.

"I—I don't know that you have," he said, as he stooped to pick it up.

"The waiters struck last night, you know," Sally went on, endeavoring to read into his well-schooled face a trace that might reveal an emotion. "I'm going down to look at the new crop. I may have to stay in a cap and apron

myself." She threw a look over her shoulder at the clock.

"If you don't mind waiting, Anne should be here in fifteen minutes."

"Thank you, I should like to wait." The curtain swung to behind her.

"The Blue Moon," said Gordon. "My God!" He walked to the window. "The Blue Moon," he repeated, and, after a pause, "What a mystery!" But the second exclamation had nothing to do with the first. He stepped into the silver-pink of the drawing-room. The air of the place, the growing flowers—the few, unusual pictures—the luxurious stuffs all appeared to him with a new significance.

That a woman who could appreciate and desire these things should have attained them for herself was unthinkable, barbaric—a mere gorgeous turn of circumstance. The very ease of it spelled impermanence. But what a magnificent whim! To keep a restaurant of hyacinth moons! To serve buttered muffins to an *obligato* of receptions and *musicales*. What a splendid, heedless gamble! He thought of her fearfully—as of a child playing on the brink of a whirlpool. Ten times more than before he wanted to take her away from it—to save her from the inevitable disillusionment that was beginning.

Women were not the stuff that such success is made of—a restless, whimsical, childlike people—capable of brief and vivid, solitary achievement.

He heard Mimi in the hall. "Yes, ma'mselle, Ma'mselle Sara is out—M'sieur Gordon——"

It seemed to Clayton Gordon as if she would never come. At last, and very slowly, she pushed aside the *portière*, and very slowly came into the room, and stood looking at him. The brief beauty of the night before had burned itself out with her fiery mood. Her face looked sharp and drawn in the searching light. But no beauty had ever moved him as those heavy eyes, that straight-set mouth.

"Child," he said, "oh, my child—I understand! I understand it all!"

She did not speak, only stood looking at him.

"Anne," he said, "don't you hear me? I love you. I want to take you out of all this. Anne, I want you to marry me—Anne, I love you!"

She moved her head with a weary motion. "Yes?" she said, a colorless question.

She flung aside her hat with negligent hand. He was startled at her lack of emotion. The black shadows under the dead gray of her eyes brought anguished realization of what she must have suffered.

"Anne," he said, speaking in such a voice as people use to a child, or the very sick, "did you hear me?"

"Oh, yes," she said, raising her eyes with the motion of an automaton. "Is there any more to be said?"

There was no resentment in her voice—only a weary sufferance. Why, at the moment when she had raised him out of himself, could he make no response from that once responsive face? Not one drop of her blood moved to his hammering pulses.

"There is a great deal to be said," he answered, gravely. "In the first place, there is the fact that I, among a mob of others, have done you an injustice—a wrong, for which there can be no apology."

"It is not worth recording," she answered. "The circumstances were extraordinary. They justified anything any one has thought."

"They do not justify me," he replied. He stood closely above her, and she did not move back an inch. "I will not have you justify me; for my attitude toward you was not, never has been, theirs. You meant too much to me always for me to lose you for such a damnable appearance. I had no right to judge by the outside of things!"

She looked at him curiously, the first expression her face had worn since she had entered the room. Her nostrils dilated slightly.

"What right had you to judge me in any other way?" she said.

"Because I love you." His voice deepened as he spoke. "Because I loved you from the moment I met you. Because when a man loves a woman he should

trust her to the last, beyond his reason. But I had taught myself to trust no one—I believe I didn't know how. And you were so strange—not like the other women I had known. You defied me, you challenged me, you shut the door of yourself in my face. I did not come to you when I should—but you must not say I'm too late. I will believe anything you say—except that I am too late."

"Of course," she said, turning slowly away with narrowing lids, "it is very magnanimous of you to believe in me, after the thing has been explained—to trust me after everything has been cleared up."

"You *can't* believe that of me!" Turn which way she would, she always found him in front of her.

"Are we to reckon of one another by appearances?"

"They are all we have to reckon by," she answered, looking steadily in his face. "They are not so deceptive as you appear to think now!"

"I know, I know! You can't see how I could have done what I did—and talk as I did! But I had never cared enough for anything before to turn my hand over to keep it. Life seemed a show. You taught me that it is real. Thank God I know before the opportunity to live escaped me!"

The joyful surety of the man, his unquestioning assumption of her to himself, fanned her quiescent despair to anger.

"Yes," she said, in a low voice, "you have learned. You are sure now that I am the person you want, and you have not let opportunity escape—you. Did it occur to you that you have taken it by force—though your moment is here, my moment, my opportunity, have gone? It did not occur to you that they would not wait? You loved me from the moment you saw me? You meant I amused you. Then, I annoyed you—then, you never cared until you thought you couldn't—" she quivered, colored, blazed, whirling fiercely on him. "That is what you call love! You want a thing, and you will have it! But when you are ready. You will not be

in haste—you will be sure everything is as it should be, and then you will have it!"

"My God," he said, his hand on her wrist. "Now keep still!"

She could not support the look in his eyes, not for an instant. But she could not look away.

"Have it—since you will have it," he said. "You baffled me, you made me angry, from the moment we met. I had never wanted to do anything but pet pretty women before. I wanted to shake you—to hurt you—because you made me love you, in spite of myself. I hated you, too, for doing what I had thought no woman could do, and I hated myself for loving you. Do you hear? I did not believe you were true—I didn't believe you cared a button for anything. But that doesn't matter now. I've changed my mind—I mean you've changed it for me—and I'm glad you did!"

She felt stifling in her rage. She could not twist her shoulders from the vice of his hands.

"You brute," she said, below her breath. "But you cannot—no, you cannot!"

"Anne, Anne, my darling, why will you make me be a brute? You know you can make me anything you like, but you can never get away from me!"

"It's useless to talk like that. You cannot force me to love you."

"You love me now! I only want you to own it!"

"You have no right——"

"If I waited for my rights, I would get nothing. Dearest dear, I love you!" His strong hands were pressing the strength out of her arms. She stiffened her elbows with a terrible fear that, if they bent to that grasp, all else bent with them.

"I want nothing from you," she murmured. "You have done enough. If you had any mercy, any dec——"

His fingers over her mouth stopped the word. "You shan't say anything to be sorry for afterward," he said, slowly, "you shan't do anything to regret. I won't let you."

The hands on her shoulder shook, but

his arms drew her to him, a slow, deliberate, irresistible force. She looked into his face, and saw there all fate and future—joy and shuddering fear—all life could promise. She tried to rally her anger—her scorn. They were shadows, gliding out of grasp. The ground of her determination was slipping from under her feet. Her stiffened arms were bending. Her forehead knitted in an anguish, her poor mouth quivered around words that were whispers. She felt herself falling. "I cannot—you shall not—I——" The sentence was suddenly obliterated.

Mimi found herself harkening to a deep silence where previously had been interesting, if incoherent, conversation. She moved a step forward, and peeped between the curtains.

What she saw was her mistress standing in the middle of the room. She had reason to believe it was her mistress, though only one hand and the top of a dark head were visible. Mimi was a woman. In such a moment the attitude of the man was the greater interest. She looked admiringly at the broad shoulders and bent head of Gordon. She dropped back with a little sigh, and waited a decent interval. Then looked once more.

Mimi was a Parisian.

"*Peste*," she said, with a shrug, "how monotonous! Surely I had supposed of monsieur better things!"

CHAPTER XVI.

"Spirit of music, I want to ask a question."

Anne's hand poised at the apex of its melodious ascent of the keyboard. She bent her eyes upon the speaker, sitting where he could watch her by the corner of the piano.

"While *we* are going down the Arno, what becomes of the Blue Moon?"

She grew faintly rosy at the emphasized plural pronoun.

"It closes, of course. What did you suppose?"

"I didn't know."

His relief was so patent that she laughed.

"Were you preparing to see me devote half my life to that, without raising one objection?" she teased.

"Of course," he seized her hovering hand that threatened to retrace its flight down the keyboard, "you are to do anything you please, except escape."

An *intermezzo* in which the piano bore no part.

"But of course I am glad you are going to give it up." He had seated himself on the piano bench beside her.

"I love it," she said, looking past him, into an indefinite future somewhere beyond the music rack. "I should hate to see it wane! It has had its part in life; now I want to stop it while it is still in its zenith—before anything tires."

"That's like you," he said, laughing. "You are such a desperate artist—to your finger tips! Your instinct tells you the proper exits and entrances of things! That is why I am about to defer humbly to your discretion a proposition of my own, concerning the closing of the Blue Moon."

"Let me see you 'defer humbly,'" she said, maliciously.

"Thus!" He squared his shoulders dramatically. "I propose, intend and determine, mauger any objections on the part of Miss Hill, share owner in the Blue Moon, to give, on the following week, a dinner in said Blue Moon to an aggregation of persons my wisdom shall select, at which function owners of said Blue Moon are to be present, which function is the last to be within the walls of said Blue Moon."

He threw back his head, and looked at her laughing. But she drooped toward him with a shrinking movement. "No, no," she said, "let's close it quietly, and not see any one. I don't care about people as long as you——"

He held her close, and talked soothingly.

"You've been under such a strain all this week! But you will feel differently in a few days. Please humor me. I

have an overwhelming longing to be astonishing, revolutionary in fact, to a number of people who think they know me; I am going to leave them all!"

His action left Anne some doubt as to what the plural pronoun referred to.

She looked up with a faint smile.

"Still deferring?" she said.

"Just one more," he replied, somewhat ambiguously, and Anne did not deny his deference.

Her curiosity concerning his scheme increased with her rising spirits. But Gordon was relentlessly mysterious. Only one name on his list of invited guests escaped his tongue. That name caused Anne to stare.

"Mrs. Owen Taberd coming back? She has hardly been gone a month!"

"Some family trouble in Chicago—a will or a divorce—equally horrible catastrophes. But she stops over a few days—and I thought you would like to have her."

"Of course. I'd love it. But she knows?"

"Nothing. No one knows anything. The dinner is set for Tuesday. It is short notice, but I didn't want to give you a chance to change your mind, and they will come, even on short notice." He smiled somewhat conceitedly.

"But," Anne persisted, still puzzled, "if they know we are coming—they——"

"Protector of my heart, leave that to me! They only know that I am giving a dinner, and that they are invited."

Anne gasped.

"And if," he pleaded, "you will consent for the first and last time, to obey unexplained orders, you will find me a not unworthy stage director."

Anne surrendered, not without protestations.

When she imparted her perplexity to Sally, that young person danced with delight. Sally already had more exuberance than she could manage, and Anne's news increased it fifty per cent. Not until her slipper lodged on top of the wardrobe, and had to be rescued with the window pole, could she be dissuaded from her *pirouette*.

"Of course," she cried, embracing her sister rapturously, "he'll have the whole bunch! How every one will bristle! The Flower will swallow her palate!"

Anne's head-shake was dubious.

"They may cut us," she replied; but her eyes twinkled.

"After all, it was too absurd; we were so innocent of the cause of our ostracism; we were so used to the poor Blue Moon we never thought of it. And the poetic justice," continued Anne, brush in hand, "is that all this scandal should arise from poor Aunt Cowden's family pride! what will she say when everything comes out?"

"Something about 'concomitant vulgarities,' and 'demoralizing influences.' But I wonder, Anne, what she will think of them?"

"Clay and Sedly? She'll be delighted. She'll disapprove on principle. She can't help it, you know. But, Sally, I have a hankering to be married from her house."

Sally looked thoughtful.

"I wonder," she said, "if sometimes we weren't awfully disagreeable to her—and selfish, and——"

"I strongly suspect that we were," replied Anne, "but when I go to break the news, we will ask her if we can please be married from there; and, Sally, we'll have the bishop do it!"

"Bully," cried the younger Miss Hill, dropping her brush to clap her hands. "It will be her last chance to thrust him upon us!"

The news that Clayton Gordon had postponed his departure for the purpose of giving a dinner at the Blue Moon stirred up a cautious undercurrent of conjecture among those invited, the interrogative pronoun being not "what," but "who?"

Leslie Flower asked no questions, either of others, or of herself. She felt a tolerable certainty of the reasons for the delay, a certainty that bloomed to surety when she found her place at the table upon the left of the host. Had Gordon divined aright her hope—intentionally reassuring it thus—or was he prompted by another motive? It is pos-

sible that Clayton Gordon was quite equal to even so great an emergency as Leslie Flower.

The guests, settling into their places, under the flattering light of the clustered globes that shone frostily from walls and ceiling of the Blue Moon's upper dining-room, raised eyebrows and exchanged undetectable glances over Mrs. Flower's situation. Mrs. Owen Taberd was amazed; partly on that account, partly because she missed two faces she had fully expected to see. But when all were seated two chairs remained vacant—two women were late.

"We will not wait the tardy any longer," the host said, gayly. "They will be their own excuse when they come." As he spoke, Wiggins opened the door—Wiggins, once more commandant of a now chastened corps of underlings—and in came Miss Hill, calm, smiling, wonderfully young, strangely at ease—so sorry they had been kept—hoped they had not been waited for—smiling and bowing down the long table at many faces, full half of which had sedulously avoided her for weeks. Only Gordon guessed at what effort that casual ease was obtained, and almost repented of his plan.

Behind her sister came Sara, a rose for color and haughtiness. The words on Mrs. Owen Taberd's lips were checked by the curious attitude in the company. Murray on her left was crimson, blinking straight before him. Bourke was pale and craning over the back of his chair. Mrs. Gifford flushing, Mrs. Torry gaping, all looking from the Misses Hill to Clayton Gordon—from Gordon to Leslie Flower.

Gordon was smiling, with a successful attempt at casualness. Wiggins drew out the empty chair upon the host's right for Anne Hill.

Leslie Flower, who had sat as still as a cat at spring, with half-closed eyes, now raised her head with that peculiar undulating movement that now seemed rippling through her whole body. She started to rise. A flutter ran down the table.

Gordon laid his hand lightly on her wrist.

"Is there anything I can get you, Mrs. Flower?" She saw his eyes, bit her lip, sank back.

"Nothing—my handkerchief——"

The people around the table plunged feverishly into conversation, a conversation arising to clamor at times, then suddenly falling into fearful gaps of silence, into which some single voice, oftenest the host's, leaped to bridge the chasm.

Eyes were roving, answers were absent, wit was forced, laughter nervous. Among the twenty-five two only were calm, unruffled and apparently enjoying themselves. Of these two, while the elder Miss Hill appeared quietly elated by some happiness that lifted her too high for the lesser things of life to disturb, the younger seemed struggling with some overwhelmingly good joke, that kept breaking out in dimples, or bubbling over in unexpected gurgles of laughter, and dancing like an elf in her glinting eyes.

What buoyed up and carried through the desperate situation, was an intuitive conviction that somewhere, sometime, there would be an explanation, and a burning curiosity as to what it might be.

Not one of the twenty-four but breathed relief, when, with the appearance of the cordials, Clayton Gordon arose to his feet. He was an easy speaker, with that trick of look and voice that makes each individual feel the words addressed to himself.

He said that postponing a trip abroad for the sake of giving a dinner—even in such a delightful place as the Blue Moon—must appear a bit whimsical, but he had received a piece of information that was sufficient excuse for waiting over two steamers.

The undivided attention of the table was his.

"I know," he said, "that we have all of us been much interested in this restaurant, that there has been much curiosity concerning the unknown owner, and some unsuccessful attempts at discovery. Discoveries are usually casual." He looked at Leslie Flower. "Mine was such. I have discovered the owners of the Blue Moon."

"Yes," he continued, "and I had the good fortune to hear a part of its history. It seems some persons of very conservative family undertook it as a means of livelihood, but in consideration for the wishes of their people they agreed to keep their business a secret—a promise up to the present time successfully adhered to. As you see, they have prospered. The success of the Blue Moon is equalled only by its beauty. In spite of this success the owners have determined to go abroad, and adopt a different method of life. They are about to close the Blue Moon. It appears to you, as it does indeed to me, a most unbusinesslike proceeding, and one we will all regret exceedingly." He paused a moment.

"I have been permitted to give the last dinner that will be given in its walls. The Blue Moon closes to-night. The owners have commissioned me to tell you this, and to their courtesy, and the hospitality of their house, I propose a toast. Ladies and gentlemen, to the owners of the Blue Moon!"

As the glasses were set down, Gordon turned from his guests to Miss Hill. She arose—was she about to answer the toast?

"My sister and I thank you for your appreciation of the Blue Moon," she said, looking down the surprise and incredulity that lined the table. "Our only regret is that such a delightful affair as this should be closed with a business detail—but—" she nodded to Wiggins, who opened the dining-room door. A curious, much-astonished band of waiters filed in upon the sight of the equally curious, equally astonished diners.

"Sara," said Miss Hill, across the table. And the younger, arising, taking a small package proffered by the solemn butler, went around the table to her sister's chair.

Standing together, flushed under the stare of forty-four eyes, gleaming neck and arms, rising out of lace and chiffon, they paid out greenbacks to an interminably approaching and retiring line of solemn waiters and embarrassed kitchen maids, shook hands and

exchanged compliments in French with the effusive *chef*, and, with the back of the last kitchen girl disappearing through the door, subsided again into their places.

Gordon, who knew his success lay in not giving his victims opportunity to act or speak until all was said, was on his feet again.

"One moment," he said, to the now standing company. "One word more. I have yet another reason for being in the Blue Moon instead of on the Atlantic. I am asked to announce the engagement of Miss Sara Hill to Mr. White, and"—he turned to Anne with a look that made Mrs. Owen Taberd want to clap her hands—"and of Miss Hill to Clayton Gordon. That is all. Thank you very much."

The room was in a tumult.

Anne, smitten dumb by the unexpected climax, reaching Mrs. Gifford's hand through the press, heard Mrs. Taberd's voice in her ear, felt her lips against her cheek.

Among the many with whom Sally and Anne shook hands, were two or three whom they sedulously avoided—though these two or three were those who most sedulously pursued them, even to the foot of the stair.

At the door of the Blue Moon stood Wiggins. From the wrought-iron bar above, the sign of the Blue Moon, lightless and dim, was slowly descending, in the grasp of a waiter backing down a ladder.

Sedly White reached, took it, and

handed it to Sally, thrusting his broad shoulders quickly between her and the willowy form of Leslie Flower.

Gordon opened the door of the coupé at the curb, handed Anne in swiftly. Sally, tossing the sign of the Blue Moon before her, sprang in after. The wheels whirled over the asphalt.

Gordon, turning, confronted the pale spark of Leslie Flower's slant eyes.

"You have nothing to say to them," he said, coolly.

Sedly, neglecting to see the bow of Murray, the financier, crooked his finger to a hansom. Mrs. Flower looked from one man to the other—nodded to Sedly, gave Gordon her hand.

"Lovely dinner, Clay," she said, with a laugh that was not music. She glanced at Murray. He followed her into the cab.

"H'm; well paired!" murmured Sedly, looking after the retreating conveyance.

But in the four wheeler that was rolling down toward lower Fifth Avenue. Sally Hill, with her feet on a globular object on the floor of the cab, dropped her head on her sister's shoulder.

"Oh, honey," she said, between tears and laughter. "The Blue Moon has set!"

Anne's arm tightened around Sally. She did not answer. Her eyes wore the look of one who dreams. She was looking through the chaos of the bewildering past—its glitter, its tarnishment—its shine, its storm—into the future, beyond.



MATILDA'S HAIR

By Austen Hancock

AT just twenty-five minutes past five, Matilda went upstairs to dress. Dinner was at half-past six, and there would probably be an interval of about fifteen minutes between the finishing of dinner and the coming of George.

This happened to be George's last night in town before his departure for a distant city, and if he didn't say it to-night—well, if he didn't! But he would. Matilda was sure of that.

She moved leisurely about the room, pursuing the mysteries of a somewhat elaborate toilet, and finally came to the most important rite of all, the doing of her hair. Alas! that the doing of Matilda's hair should prove to be the undoing of Matilda!

She had rather pretty hair, of the sort that makes other girls wish that their's wasn't quite so straight. When a lot of them were on a windy drive, or a boating party, or anything of the sort, and Matilda joined in the general wail of "My hair!" she was always exasperated at the unanimous chorus of "Oh, yours is curly!" She thought it looked just as badly, blowing all about, as that of the others; but as a matter of fact, it didn't.

Just now she stood in front of the mirror and regarded herself with big, serious eyes, and wondered what she should do with it on this momentous occasion. Which way did George like it the best? At length she piled it in a beautiful, crownlike mass on the top of her shapely head, picked up a hand-glass, and surveyed it critically from all points of view.

On any ordinary day it would have satisfied her; but to-night—Matilda

paused, pulled out a hairpin, pushed it in again, hesitated, and was lost. It must come down. Accordingly, down it came. Then she coiled it in a soft, Grecian knot at the back of her neck. The effect was stunning, but when she got her gown on, she couldn't turn her head; she realized with a sudden blush that to-night of all nights that might be rather inconvenient; so off came the gown and down came the hair. She was beginning to be a little out of temper.

With a feeling akin to despair, she started a "figure eight" at the back of her head. She was not at all surprised to discover, on completing it, that it was crooked; not coyly and daintily askew, but hopelessly, heavily, helplessly crooked. Just then her small sister called up from below:

"Father wants to know why you don't come to dinner."

Matilda began to pull the pins out of her hair.

"Tell him I don't want any dinner," she announced.

And she began.

She coiled her hair. She twisted it. She fastened it at the top with an elastic; she parted it into mysterious "front" and "side" locks. She brushed it back smoothly; she parted it demurely. She pulled it into a pompadour that made her look like a French actress; she dragged it into a "vaudeville dip," and became almost hysterical when she saw the effect it gave her usually sweet and refined features. She brushed it until every tangle was out; she ran her fingers through it until it became even as the quills upon the fretful porcupine. In fact, there was noth-

ing she did not do to it, short of cutting it off—and once she almost started to go into her mother's room for the scissors.

Small sister finished her dinner, came into Matilda's room, sat on the foot of the bed, criticised, suggested, advised. All in vain. Matilda's hair simply would not be done.

Then did Matilda become weary, and cast herself upon the bed, and wept bitterly.

Small sister racked her brains. "Mother?" she suggested, doubtfully.

"Mother!" She quailed before the look of scorn in one flash of Matilda's only visible eye. It was true; mother certainly could not do Matilda's hair—or anybody's.

"I'll go and get Rosie Haines," she said, with an inspiration.

"She's out of town," moaned Matilda.

"Could I——" hesitatingly.

"No, you couldn't," sobbed Matilda. "Nobody could! I don't care, now—I won't dress at all—I won't go down—I won't see him—I'll—I'll—I'll be an ol—old maid!"

Small sister winked solemnly to herself in the glass.

"Oh, no, you won't!" she said. "He'll write, or stay over another day, or something."

"He won't!" said Matilda. "He'll think I don't want to see him, and he'll go away, and——"

The door bell interrupted her.

Small sister slid off the foot of the bed.

"I'll go," she said, thoughtfully.

"Good-evening, George," she said, a minute later. "Sister isn't very well. She has a bad headache, and thinks that she is unable to receive any one this evening; but I think that if you should insist, she would see you a moment, just to—to say good-by, you know."

"Most certainly I would like to see your sister," said the young man, slightly perplexed, "but of course if she is not feeling well enough to see me, I——"

But small sister had vanished. She reached Matilda's room somewhat out of breath.

"Go down!" she commanded. "He's waiting, and says he *must* see you, and——"

"Like *this*?" said the horrified Matilda.

"Like that! Hurry—*don't lose any time!*" She flung herself on Matilda and fairly forced her from the room.

And so it chanced that George, waiting in the dimly-lighted hall below, saw coming toward him Matilda, in a most fetching and dainty *negligée* arrangement, all snowy lace and coquettish ruffles—Matilda, with her pretty hair all loose and waving softly down to her waist—Matilda, with her brown eyes wet with tears, and her sweet little mouth a-trembling—a Matilda to steal one's very heart away!

Then George lost his head—just for a moment.

"Why, my darling," he said, "my own dear little girl, what is the matter?"

And Matilda, seeing the light in his eyes, and his hands held out to her, very properly flung herself into his arms and sobbed on his shoulder.

After George left, small sister came into Matilda's room.

"Why did you say I had a headache?" asked Matilda.

"Because I knew you'd say you had," small sister answered. "Wasn't it all right?"

"Yes," said Matilda, reflectively, "it was all right."



TILL THE END OF TIME

By Cosmo Hamilton

I AM talking of last year—June of last year.

On the sixteenth of that anxious month there were two women, extremely alive, who possessed a sense of humor, difficult as you will find it to believe.

One was Olive, the wife of the member for a small constituency, which mainly consists of golf links, on a quiet part of the south coast—Arthur Pembry Staithes, as of course you will guess.

The other was the life-long friend of Arthur's wife, whose name was Enid Romily. You will have seen her name in the illustrated papers, not only in the capacity of an amateur actress, a capacity which does not, as a rule, spell popularity, but for its own sake, as it occupied front pages most satisfactorily, there being few of the many delightful girls in this over-crowded country who make better subjects for the camera.

Not for this reason only was the photograph popular with editors. Enid Romily was the lucky young woman who came into twenty-two thousand a year, and a couple of quite useful houses on the death of her father. Twenty-two thousand a year makes the photograph even of a plain young woman interesting.

The fact that these two uncommon women, the only possessors of a sense of humor in England at that moment, were together in a country house will lead you to believe that something quite interesting would happen. As a matter of fact, something quite interesting *did* happen. When you know what it was I think you will agree with me that it was, and will continue to be, a matter of the first interest to all properly consti-

tuted men and women till the end of time.

I will go into details. You know as well as I do that when there are two friends, one married and the other unmarried, who is very pretty, with more than enough money for one, the former devotes the whole of her waking, and many of her sleeping, moments, to planning the marriage of the latter, and the latter, extremely well satisfied to remain single, amuses herself with upsetting the schemes of the former.

During May and the earlier part of June, Enid Romily had been staying at the Staithes' narrow but charming house in Sloane Street, wedged in between that of an unsuccessful manager who was regarded by the critics as the one great actor in England, and a successful society dentist who boasted that he knew nothing of teeth. While there, Mrs. Staithes paraded in front of Enid a succession of single men and widowers of all nationalities and different taste in ties with the indomitable energy and pluck of the born matchmaker. Unsuccessfully, however. Enid refused to be knotted to any of these eager and, for the most part, penniless men.

With that perversity that makes women so charmingly unmonotonous it came to pass that Enid was greatly attracted by a friend of her friend's husband, who, being an ardent golfer, was, of course, a confirmed misogynist.

You will have heard of Edward Harbury. He is the man who won the monthly medal five times running at Hurlingham, and consequently, to his disgust, found himself more famous than the defender of Ladysmith, or the

leader of the fourth party, whoever that may be. Mrs. Staithes told him of the twenty-two thousand, and pointed out to him that Enid would make an almost unique wife. Harbury was a strange man. He dined in Sloane Street twice, lunched once, and joined the Staithes' theatre party on several occasions, but he always rigorously kept his eyes away from Enid, and talked golf with his host.

The result was inevitable.

Staithes, who knew that Olive considered Harbury the very man for Enid, and that Enid was inclined to agree with her, was amused. Olive, who had always looked upon golf as a dangerous game, was annoyed, and Enid, who liked Harbury all the more for his total indifference, was piqued and determined.

At this point of the game a general shuffle took place. For two reasons, the first because of the smallness of his banking account, and the second his mania for golf, Harbury left the service and London. Enid went into Dorsetshire on a duty visit to her godmother, and Mrs. Staithes retired to Old Pembury Hall, Arthur's place on the south coast. Poor Arthur remained on at Westminster, voting for the government between quiet naps in the House and exciting bouts of bridge at the Orleans.

And then coincidence stretched out its long arm, and laid a hand upon this foursome.

Teddy Harbury heard that the links near Old Pembury Hall were very sporting, and took a cottage as near them as possible. Olive, greatly delighted, wired to Enid to come and stay, and Enid, more determined than ever, arrived.

Thus it came to pass that the only two women in England with a sense of humor were alone in a country house, and that, as a natural consequence, something happened.

There was excitement as well as affection in the kiss which Olive Staithes presented to Enid on her arrival.

"Isn't it providential," she whispered. "He's here for six months."

"In this house, do you mean?" cried Enid, correcting the set of her hat and the set of her hairpins with quick, deft fingers.

Mrs. Staithes was the more excited of the two. She pulled Enid to the narrow window in the hall.

"Look," she said.

"I see only downs, and a bungalow miles away," said Enid.

"That's Capt. Harbury's cottage, and it's only a quarter of a mile away. To the right of it you can see the clubhouse. Do you play golf, I forget?"

"No," said Enid, quietly, "but I will, if necessary."

"That's right," said Olive, enthusiastically. "I do love people to enter into the spirit of things. It does help one so."

Over Enid's beautiful face a strange, sweet smile stole.

"It's very kind of you, dear Olive," she said, "to take such an interest in us. But I think I will marry Capt. Harbury by myself. I have promised myself the pleasure of making him pay for his utter indifference, and—don't be cross—I don't think I could stand any more matchmaking after all you made me suffer in Sloane Street."

Mrs. Staithes merely laughed.

"Knowing Capt. Harbury," Enid continued, "I take it he has been too hard at work playing to come and see you yet?"

"You underrate my usefulness, and expose your ignorance of male humanity. As a matter of fact, Capt. Harbury came to ask my advice about servants before he moved into his cottage. He's got an ancient body to do his cooking—she was his nurse, I believe—and he asked me to try and find a girl to do the housework. 'A quiet, plain, young, woman,' he said. 'A servant, but a lady help, who will be scared at the sight of me'—Why are you laughing, Enid; what is the matter? Have I said anything unintentionally funny? My dear, you'll have hysterics!"

Enid's laughter filled the hall like sunlight. Peel after peel she laughed, rocking herself to and fro on the arm of a chair.

"Is there a dress in my whole collection that looks prim and quiet?"

"Why?" replied Mrs. Staithes, in the usual feminine way.

"Is there, is there?"

"I've never seen one."

"Then tell me the name of a place where one can be bought, at once!"

"My dear Enid," said Mrs. Staithes, genuinely concerned. "I am afraid the air of Dorsetshire cannot have agreed with you. I have never seen you quite like this before. Tell me without excitement exactly what you mean."

Enid seized her friend's hands.

"I mean," she said, "*that I am the quiet, plain, young woman.*"

And then it was that Olive laughed.

"You," she cried, between the gusts of it, "you quiet, plain? Oh, ho, ho! You might as well expect me to believe that any one could turn Cleopatra's needle into a toothpick. Besides, why should you be a quiet, plain, young woman?"

"Because I am going into his cottage as lady help."

For the hundredth part of a second a shocked expression sat upon Mrs. Staithes' delicately cut face. Then came one of amused understanding. The sense of humor so often referred to saved her from making a speech full of insular terms upon what a woman should never do, such as one has grown accustomed to from British matrons.

"Oh, Enid," she said, "what a jibe, but what a difficult thing to do."

"Difficult," scoffed Enid, moving restlessly here and there. "Not a bit! Haven't I played at least a dozen parts more difficult? Aren't I supposed to be, according to the papers, a great loss to the stage? Olive, it is the opportunity of a lifetime. Never did a woman have such a chance to make a man pay as I have now. A golf maniac, is he? A woman hater, is he? Well, I'll make it my business to cut out golf, and bring him to the firm, unalterable conviction that marriage—with me—is the only proper state. Send a letter at once to tell him that you have found the quiet, plain, young woman, and that she will enter upon her duties to-day."

"To-day!"

"Well, then, to-morrow. And now come and help me look out a suitable frock."

Olive Staithes ran to the door, and then turned, with a twinkle in her eye.

"And when he proposes to you," she said, "shall you accept him?"

"My dear," said Enid, "I'm almost certain that I am putting myself out like this merely to enjoy a righteous revenge. To pique a woman is nearly as dangerous as to tread on the self-conceit of a man. Both under these conditions resemble porcupines."

Olive caught hold of a button—a large, curiously-shaped button, a purely decorative button—and said, looking through her eyelashes:

"But will you swear that you are not already a little in love with him?"

For the shade of a moment Enid remained silent. She let her eyes dwell on some object several thousand miles away. The faintest, softest smile played at the corners of her mouth. She then adopted an air of mild reproach, and took her friend by the arm.

"My dear Olive, I think you have known me long enough, to be aware that I never swear."

Men asked each other what had happened to Teddy Harbury.

A week had passed since he put in an appearance on the links. A solid week. He had gone up to London. He had sprained his wrist. Fifty reasons were suggested, discussed and dismissed. A young, flippant member, who wore a knitted red tie, a coat of one color, a waistcoat of another, and exceedingly well-cut golf breeches of a third, sneered at their crass ignorance of the world, and lightly attributed Harbury's extraordinary behavior to Cupid.

A chorus of "Oh, rot!" arose like a covey of partridges, and some one pitched a new roll at the very young man's head. He caught the roll, and with an easy and unconvinced smile, buttered and dispatched it.

"Harbury in love; why, good heavens, he's a misogynist!"

"All men are misogynists until they meet the right girl," murmured the very young man. And when he arose from his lunch, and lit a cigarette on the veranda, an elderly member took another pickled onion, and said:

"That young man will end badly. He sacrifices his best instincts to the turning of a phrase, and he spends a fortune on ties. Harbury hates women." He sighed, and laid his hand for a moment on the pocket in which a large dress bill was stinging him like a nettle. "And he's not far wrong," he added.

The point is, did that young man deserve to have a roll pitched at his head? You who know all there is to know about love will be able to tell from Harbury's symptoms what Cupid had to do with his absence from the golf club. For two days after the arrival at his cottage of the quiet, plain, young woman, Harbury read his paper at meals, from which he never glanced up, spoke in quick, decisive monosyllables, and played golf with his wonted enthusiasm till the light gave out. He made a point of never once looking at the girl who waited upon him so quietly, so competently, and with an understanding that was extremely soothing.

On the evening of the third day, however, he returned sooner than usual, in order to write a letter to catch the last post. As he opened the gate of the cottage the quiet, plain, young woman was seated at the piano, singing. The voice that drifted out at the open window was delicious. The playing all that could be desired. Teddy Harbury had a keen ear for music. Unlike most men he was able, nine times out of ten, to whistle "The Road to Mandalay" clean through without once going flat. He wondered, in his peculiar, slow way, who under heaven sang like that in his cottage. The old body? The quiet, plain, young woman? Absurd, obviously. He peered through the window.

Profile toward him, with her head tilted back, her beautiful lips parted, an intensely sympathetic look in her great gray eyes, sat a very beautiful girl he had no recollection of ever having seen

in his life. She was singing "*Caller Herrin*" with a throb in her voice that brought a lump to his throat.

Almost unconsciously Harbury made his way into the cottage, and stood looking down at her, listening. In the middle of the third verse Enid looked up, caught his eyes, and sprang to her feet. I can't tell you which was the more disconcerted.

"Pray, don't let me disturb you," said Teddy, wondering what angel had fallen to earth, and thanking his stars that his cottage had been chosen by her to alight in.

"It's—it's very kind of you not to be angry with me for doing this."

"Angry? Oh, please make use of this cottage in whatever way you like."

Enid could see that he had no notion who she was. She became more and more uncomfortable, more and more piqued. It was borne in upon her with almost stunning force that he had not once looked at her, although she had waited upon him at every meal for three days. Good heavens, it was enough to make any woman annoyed.

"I know it isn't usual for lady helps to play the piano, but I had finished my work, and I didn't think you would be back quite so soon."

"Are you—are you——" Teddy got no further. With his mouth open, he watched her bow slightly, and slip like a sunbeam out of the room.

From that moment Harbury's whole interest was centered in the cottage. He lingered over his breakfast, lunch and dinner. He insisted upon his lady help taking those meals with him, and exerted himself, with a superabundance of forethought, in looking after her requirements. He chatted to her in a lumbering kind of way in order to hear her voice. He made feeble jokes in order to hear her laugh. With his own hands he carried the dishes in to the kitchen, and surreptitiously made his own bed in the morning. I believe he would have dried the plates, but that he was afraid of the astonished eye of his old nurse.

His whole day was spent in inventing excuses to speak to the girl with whom he knew himself to be falling momen-

tarily, hopelessly in love. Under her guidance he altered his pictures for no apparent reason. Doggy things for the most part, and regimental groups, and polo ponies, watching her always out of the corner of his eye. In the evenings he begged her to make use of his piano, and sat in dark corners looking at her, with a pipe in his mouth that refused to keep alight.

On her part, Enid played her game with consummate skill and tact. She took his attentions and his help quietly. She was respectful, but proud. She rarely caught his eye, but when she did, it was with one of those under-the-lash looks which pretty women know so well how to use. She watched his utter subjugation with feelings of immense satisfaction. So it went on for a week. Daily reports of proceedings—I believe they made amusing reading—were sent by Enid to Olive, who frequently told herself it was the most exciting time she had ever spent. Finally, things were brought to a sudden head by a note from Olive, in which she stated with many underlinings, that Arthur had paired off, and was coming down to play golf with Capt. Harbury for three or four days. Of course it would never do for him to find Enid at the cottage, the cat would positively leap out of the bag.

Enid took the note to her bedroom, and stood facing herself in the glass. There was no necessity to ask herself any questions. Her heart told her things she had no need to put into words. In paying out Harbury she pursued the not unwomanly policy of spoiling her nose to spite her face. In plain English, she acknowledged that there was now only one man in Great Britain who should ever be her husband. In the morning she packed her bag, and before any one was about sent a caddy with it to the Staithes' place.

At breakfast Harbury was in the highest spirits. He had been into his affairs, and found that it would be perfectly possible by giving up cigars, a couple of clubs, an occasional plunge on a horse, for two to live on his income. His nurse would have something to say

to him for marrying his lady help. But, after all, he was too old to smack! He didn't allow himself to think of the possibility of being thanked kindly and refused. Anything, even being the wife of a poor man, would be better than making beds and laying the table for meals for no larger wages than twenty-one pounds a year.

Enid arose after breakfast, and stood looking on the floor.

"Capt. Harbury," she said, quietly, steadying a little tremor in her voice, "I am sorry not to be able to give you the usual month's notice. Important business makes it necessary for me to ask you to allow me to leave to-day."

With a gasp Teddy sprang to his feet.

"Leave!" he cried. "To-day!—One moment, please. I will just—"

He dashed out of the breakfast-room, plunged like a bull into his den, flung everything out of his way, and sitting down at his desk wrote hard for many minutes.

He then sang out for the old lady. The note was taken in by this suspicious but well-meaning soul, and handed with a sniff to Enid.

"The captain arst me to wait for an answer, miss." The miss was underlined.

Enid took the note with a slightly trembling hand.

"Don't wait, thank you. I will give Capt. Harbury the answer myself."

Then she tore open the envelope.

"Don't go. Please don't go. You know the cottage. It's a poor thing. You know me. I ain't much good. But if you think you could stick us both, stay always, as skipper. I'll do the work. I'll do any mortal thing to make you happy. Forgive me saying so, but I love you past all words."

With damp eyes, Enid kissed the hurried scrawl, and on tiptoe crept out of the cottage, and ran like the wind.

That afternoon, spoiling for a game, Arthur hurried into Teddy's cottage. They collided in the passage.

"Good, man," cried the truant M. P., "off to the links, eh? Why, my dear chap, what's the row? You look wor-

ried, and what's the meaning of this go-to-meeting kit?"

Harbury was in all the bravery of blue serge and a black tie.

"I'm not playing," he said. "I'm out of form. I'm just off to see your wife on important business."

Arthur argued for many useless moments, and then watched Teddy disappear in the distance, at five and a half miles an hour.

He found Olive in the drawing-room with Enid. A united peal of their laughter still echoed around the room.

"Mrs. Staithes," said Teddy, barely shaking hands, "will you please give me the address of——"

He stopped with a gasp, and looked at Enid in amazement. She sat in a window seat, a great bowl of red roses on a shelf to her left. It would be difficult to say which had the redder cheeks.

With an utter absence of insular self-control not frequently met with in a sol-

dier, Teddy made a dash at Enid, and took her in his arms.

"I've got you," he said, "and I'll never let you go again as long as I live. What do you mean by bolting like that? I waited for an hour without breathing. Why did you go?"

"Capt. Harbury, please!" But Enid made no attempt to get away.

Then Olive saw her chance. This was the man, who, two months before, had resolutely refused to have anything to say to the Miss Romily with twenty-two thousand a year. This!

"There doesn't seem to be any need to re-introduce you to my friend, Miss Romily," she said.

Without a word Teddy moved back as though he had been shot, and sat heavily down. In the silence that followed, Mrs. Staithes, in the most bare-faced manner, left the room.

"I think we will also. Under similar conditions you would hate to be overlooked. I should, anyway."



DANCE MUSIC

I DREAMED the music with its rhythmic grace
 Crept down the hall where we two stood apart;
 Once more the spirit of thy haunting face
 Swept Memory's fingers on my sleeping heart.
 Thy nervous arm encircled me, my ear
 Thirstily drank thy words, as in a trance
 We whirled to where the crystal chandelier
 Swung its pale light across the winding dance.
 I felt thy pulses close and hot to mine,
 And Youth and Joy and Life were ours again,
 And Hope peered down the glittering shafts of Time
 And found no scoria mid its golden vein.
 I woke. I saw our wild love wan and old,
 And thou, far off—silent—estranged and cold.

JULIEN GORDON.

THE BLIND MADONNA

By Harold MacGrath

Author of "The Grey Cloak," "The Puppet Crown," Etc.

IT had rained all day, a miserable drizzling rain, cold and foggy.

The horses had remained in the stables, the dogs in the kennels, and the fox in the chicken-coop. I stole out during luncheon to take a look at Master Renard. He looked shamedfaced and bedraggled enough, shut up in that coop. I felt sorrow for him, and told Mrs. Chadwick so.

"At least you might have given him a chicken for company," I said. "He looked disgusted with life."

Mrs. Chadwick smiled, and remarked that she would see that Master Renard had his chicken.

"Do you think he would prefer it broiled or baked?"

From then on I had played ping pong, bridge and billiards, and made violent love to three or four married women because it was safe, and easy, and politic—and exciting. I had an idea for a story, but needed a married woman's opinion as to how it should properly end.

The end was still hidden in a nebulous uncertainty as the colonel (our host) led us men into the armory, with its huge fireplace, its long basswood table upon which we had at devious times carved our initials, its gunracks and trophies of the chase. A servant passed around fine Scotch and brandy and soda with which we proceeded to tonic our appetites; for dinner was to be announced within an hour. I took out my penknife and began at my uncompleted carving.

Renwood, who owned a fine racing stable, brought up the subject which had interested us during the mail hour

that morning: the losses which Cranford had suffered in an exclusive gambling house in New York City.

"Thirty thousand is a fat lump to lose this side of the Atlantic," Renwood observed.

"Not beyond the Rockies," added Collingwood, who had done some fancy mining in Nevada. "I saw Judge — lose seventy-five thousand at faro one night in Carson City."

"What did Cranford play, roulette or faro?" I asked.

"The papers say roulette," replied Renwood. "It's a bad game. There is some chance at faro, if the game is square. But roulette; bah! It is plain robbery."

"The blind Madonna of the Pagan, as Stevenson called chance," mused the colonel, lighting a cigar. "I often wonder if gambling is not as much a particle of our blood as salt. Perhaps you have all wondered why I never have kept a racing stable, why I play bridge and poker for fun. I remember—"

Chairs moving noisily in the colonel's direction interrupted him. I doubled up my knife and carried my Scotch to his end of the table.

"If it's a story, colonel," said Old Fletcher, navy, retired, "let's have it."

The colonel took out his watch and eyed it critically.

"We have just three-quarters of an hour. Did you ever hear of how I broke one of the roulette banks at Monte Carlo?"

"Why, you old reprobate!" exclaimed Fletcher; "you've just told us that you never gambled."

"I merely said that I do not," replied the colonel.

"Broke the bank?" cried Renwood. "You never told me about that."

"I have never told any one. I ought not to tell you——"

"You can't back out of it now," said I.

"Not in a thousand years," echoed Fletcher. "If you took any gold away from Monte Carlo, I want to hear all about it."

"Very well," acquiesced the colonel; "but the tale must not go beyond this armory;" and he looked at me as he said it.

"Oh, I shouldn't mention any names," I declared; "and I should twist it around some."

There was an interval of silence, broken only by the rattling of the ice in Collingwood's glass.

Our host was a man of about forty-eight. His hair was white, but his face was youthful and amazingly handsome; and I knew many a woman who envied Mrs. Chadwick, even as many a man envied the colonel. I never saw a handsomer pair, or a pair so wrapt up in each other. I shall let the colonel tell his own story, which needs no embellishments from me.

In the spring of 1887 I packed up and took passage for England. The slump in Wall Street the preceding winter had left me with only seven thousand in cash, and this estate heavily mortgaged. The only way I could save the seven thousand and what remained of the property was to get away from the street.

I made my sister a short visit. I had been one of the ushers at her wedding, and her husband, Lord ———, thought I was a jolly good lad because I was the only sober man at the bachelor dinner at the Richmond. This was due to a little invention of my own which I acquired at Harvard in my college days: putting plenty of olive oil on my salad. I played golf over his lordship's course, fished and hunted over his really fine preserves; and in return told

him not to invest in the Southern Pacific till the following year.

It was my misfortune to run into Jack Smeed in London. He was a classmate of mine, and one of the best fellows that ever lived. But he was the most splendid spendthrift I ever came across. He showed me Paris as few foreigners have ever seen it.

At that time he was a famous war correspondent, art critic and poet. He inveigled me and my seven thousand to Dieppe. It was still summer. One night we visited a gambling palace. I had gambled in stocks, but had never played straight gambling, thinking it too tame a sport for a speculator. Tame! I smile these days when I think of my adventure; but heaven knows I did not smile then.

Very well. Smeed aroused the latent gambler's blood in my veins, and I began to play.

"Never play a system," said Smeed one night, after having won something like ten thousand francs. "Systems make gambling a vice. Take your chance on any old number, if it's roulette. If you are lucky you will win, no matter where you play. Systems and suicides were born of the same mother."

A week later he received one of those historic telegrams, calling him to some African outbreak, or Indian, I can't recall which. At any rate, it left me alone in Dieppe. I had been passably fortunate at roulette; that is to say, I invariably won back what I lost. I believe I had about five thousand of the original seven. Dieppe is very enticing in the summer; the bands, the hotels, the handsome women, the military and the sea.

The night after Smeed had gone I sauntered over to the tables and played a modest stake, won and lost, won and lost again. The blind Madonna was merely flirting with me, luring me on.

I suddenly threw restraint to the winds, and plunged. I won heavily, and then began to lose. Unconsciously I had discovered a system, and like a stubborn fool I stuck to it—29 and 26. Neither of these numbers came up till more than four thou-

sand of my capital had taken its place at the croupier's elbow. I had been sensible enough to leave some of my money at the hotel.

I went away from the tables, perspiring and burning with fever. I cursed the blind Madonna, and counted over the money I had remaining. It was exactly seven hundred. This would pay my passage home.

But the spirit of gambling ran riot in my veins. Besides, I thirsted for revenge. What! an old sport like myself give up? Bah! all or nothing.

I returned, and placed the seven hundred on black. I won. I stuffed the original stake in my pocket and put the winnings on the odd. I won again. I had twenty-one hundred; so I stopped and watched the game. I observed a handsome young boy plunging madly; he was losing, but in a lordly fashion.

When I got back to my room I flipped up a coin to see whether I should stay in Dieppe or leave in the morning for Paris, where my sister was a guest of the wife of one of the British *attachés*.

When a man gambles he wants to do it thoroughly. Heads, I was to go; tails, I was to remain and buck the tiger. Heads it fell; and I packed my trunk. No more of the blind Madonna for me, I vowed. I had had enough, perhaps more than enough. One does not lose the habit overnight.

On the way from Dieppe to Paris a veiled woman entered my carriage, which was third, nothing else being obtainable. Rather, she entered immediately after I did. She was accompanied by a young man of twenty-one or two. His face was good to look at, but at present it was marred by sullen chagrin and despair. Occasionally I saw the girl's hands close convulsively. These hands were so beautifully small and white that I was anxious to see their owner's face; but this pleasure was denied me.

Presently she addressed me in German, inquiring the time we should reach Paris.

I don't know what possessed me, but I replied in French that I did not understand German. She repeated the question in French, and I answered. The

young man took out his fob, and I could see that his watch was gone.

Half an hour passed. I tried to read the magazines, but invariably found myself gazing in the direction of the girl. After a space I heard her address the young man in German.

"What have you done? What have you done?" It was a very pathetic voice, verging on tears.

"Curse it, what's the use of taking on so? The money's gone; sniveling won't bring it back." He thrust his hands into his pockets and scowled at his boots. Suddenly he raised his eyes and stared suspiciously at me. Evidently an idea struck him. "Betty, perhaps this fellow opposite can understand German."

I never turned a hair. Somehow I was positive that he was the girl's brother. And just then it occurred to me that I had seen his face before, but where I could not tell.

"But what shall we do? You dare not write home, and I have given you all but passage money, and I will not let you have that."

She was not German, but she spoke that language with a sweetness and fluency impossible to describe.

"But the pater will stand another call from you," the youth declared.

"And immediately suspect the cause. Oh, that you should do such a thing! And I trusted you! Something told me not to let you carry the money."

"Oh, bother!" This was said in good English; and I looked over the top of my magazine.

"What made you do it?" wailed the girl. "Six thousand pounds, and father gave five of it to you to buy consols with. It will break his heart, and mother's, too. It was all the ready money he had."

"Curse it, I'd have broke the bank in another moment. But 17, 20 and 32 never came up till all my cash was gone. Why, I had the maximum on black, even, the second dozen, and 20, one play. If it had come up I'd have broke the bank."

"But it didn't come up; it never does.

"What will you do? What excuse will you have?"

"I can tell the pater that I was robbed," lamely.

"You wouldn't lie, Dick!"

"Oh, of course not. I'll get it of old Uncle Lewis. My chance at the estate is worthy twenty times six thousand. Damn the luck!" The youth swore softly in his native tongue, and I could see the sparkle of a tear behind the girl's veil.

Ah! I recollected. It was the young fellow whom I had seen at the Casino, plunging heavily. These roulette wheels were pretty gresentsome things. I congratulated myself on being out of it. But I passed the congratulations a little too early, as will be seen. Your Uncle Lewis, I thought, would never get his pawnbroker's claws on any of my property.

When I arrived in Paris I never expected to see them again. But the blind Madonna of the Pagan is not always concerning herself with roulette banks.

I remained in Paris till February. My sister helped me out of her private purse. Probably she would not have done so had she known how deeply I had pledged the old homestead. I began to feel like myself again. I cabled my brokers to buy July wheat, and mailed a thousand for margin.

From Paris I went to Nice. I met some Americans there. The gambling fever seemed to have possessed them all. I was dragged into the maelstrom. I became mad and unreasoning.

I arrived at Monaco with exactly one hundred louis. By this time I had mortgaged the estate to the last penny. I was nearing that precipice over which all gamblers finally tumble: ruin. Ruin makes a man reckless, defiant, devil-may-care. Heavens! what luck I had had. The gold had melted away "like snow upon the the desert's dusty face."

Right in the middle of this fever came a call from Wall Street for more margin. I cabled back to my brokers to go, one and all, to the hottest place they could think of. I dared not ask my sister for any assistance, for she abhorred gambling of all kinds. Besides,

I had some pride left. You wouldn't have believed all this of me, would you? But it is all true enough.

I had very serious thoughts of cashing in all my checks, and making the prince pay for my funeral. I shook my fist at his yacht which lay in the harbor below.

I made an inventory, and found that I possessed one hundred louis, and some twenty-odd pieces of miscellaneous coin. I wandered about till night, when I ate a remarkably good dinner, topping it off with a pint of chambertin and champagne mixed. This gave me a splendid courage.

At ten I took a promenade through the gardens and listened to the band, which is one of the finest in the world. They were playing Strauss waltzes. It was warm. To the north lay the mountain, to the south the Mediterranean trembled in the moonlight; the lights of the many private yachts twinkled. It was a mighty fair world—to those of cool blood and unruffled conscience. I jingled the louis, smoked three or four cigars, then directed my steps toward the Casino.

I immediately sought out that table which is close to the famous painting of the girl and the horse. I forget what you call the picture. The croupier was wizened and bald. Somehow I fancied that I saw 29 in the construction of his eyes and nose. So I placed a louis on that number. I won. Immediately I put fifty louis on the odd and fifty on the black, leaving my winnings on the lucky number. The ball rolled into zero. Very coolly I searched through my pockets. I put what silver I found on black. The ball tumbled into number 1, which is red.

I was, in the parlance of the day, absolutely strapped. My dinner had not been paid for, even. I lit a cigar. I even recalled seeing an actor play this piece of bravado. I arose from my chair, and flecked the ashes from my shirt bosom. I stared at the girl and the horse for a brief space and felt of my watch! Hello! I still had that, and with its jewels was worth about four hundred dollars. I hurried back to the

hotel and saw the proprietor. After an hour's dickering he consented to loan me five hundred francs on it. I wisely paid my bill for three days in advance.

I returned to the Casino.

"Monsieur," said a handsome woman, whose eyes had proved pitfalls for many an unwary one, "only one louis, and look! I know a way to make Monsieur le Croupier push the rake toward me. Eh?"

"Here," said I, giving her the louis. She flew away, and I laughed. Gambling never had any dignity nor disinterestedness.

Of all those I had left at the table only three remained. The other faces were new. And how that pile of gold and bank-notes at the side of the croupier had grown!

A crabbed old lady arose, crumpling her system card in her hand, and I popped into her vacant chair. I cast about a casual glance. Seated next to me was a very beautiful young girl. She was alone, and appeared most emphatically out of place in this gilded Hades. Her eyes were blue and moist and starlike, but there was fever in her cheeks and lips. There was very little gold before her, and this dwindled as I watched. She was playing 17, 20 and 32, persistently and doggedly; and each time the rake drew in her money I could see her delicate nostrils quiver and her lips draw to a thin line. From time to time she cast a hasty glance over her shoulder, a shamed and hunted look. In watching her I came very near forgetting why I was seated at the table.

"Make your game, gentlemen; make your game—— The game is made."

Whirr-rr-rr! went the evil sphere. It dropped into 20. The girl at my side gasped, but too soon. The ball bounded out, and zig-zagged till it rolled complacently into the zero. The young girl had played her last louis and lost. A chivalric impulse came to me to thrust half of my money toward her. I had done as much for a woman of the half world. But the gambler's selfishness checked the generous deed. The blind Madonna was abiding her time, as you shall presently see.

The girl arose, brushing her eyes. She turned, and in a moment had disappeared in the moving throng of sight-seers.

"Make your game, gentlemen!"

I came back to the sordidness of things. 17, 20, 32; where had I seen this combination before?—— Good heavens, that was not possible! Where was her brother? If this should be the girl of the railway coach! I half arose, as if to follow. Chance whispered in my ear: "Of what use?" I laid a stake on 29. In less than forty minutes I had nothing left but three days' board at the hotel. I fingered my gold cuff buttons. The rubies were at least worth two hundred francs—— No; I would not part with them. They were heirlooms. They should be buried with me.

I forgot all about the beautiful girl and her despair. I, Robert Chadwick, of an old and respected family, once wealthy, had reached the end of my rope. It would make interesting reading in the papers. Not a penny to my name, not a roof over my head, unless I swallowed my pride and begged of my sister. I could send home for nothing, because at home I had nothing.

"Make your game, gentlemen," said the baldheaded croupier.

I sat there, stupidly watching the ball. It rolled into zero, and the fat English brewer added three hundred and fifty louis to his ill-gotten gains. I experienced the wild desire to spring upon him and cram his wealth down his fat throat. What right had he to win when he had millions backing him? I felt through my clothes again, and the croupier eyed me coldly.

"Never mind, monsieur," I said to him, with a snarling laugh; "I have paid for my chair to-night."

"Twenty-nine wins, black and odd!"

My number! It repeated. The brewer laughed as he heard my oath.

"Here is your louis, monsieur," cried a voice over my shoulder. A louis dropped in front of me. I looked up. It was the irregular lady to whom I had given the gold upon entering.

I threw a kiss at her as she danced away. She had won three thousand

francs at red-and-black. I spun the coin in the air and let it rest where it fell. From where I sat it looked as if it had split upon 17 and 20. 20 came up, and I expected to receive at least half the stake. But the croupier warned me back with the rake. He and an attendant peered searchingly at the coin, then beckoned to me to observe. The breadth of a hair separated the rim of the coin from the line. I had lost.

"Damnation!" I arose and made my way through the crowd. I gained the outer air, biting my mustache. Till that moment I had never measured the extent of my vituperative vocabulary. I swore till I was out of breath. I cursed Smeed for having aroused the gambling devil in my veins; I cursed my lack of will power; I cursed the luck which had followed me these ten months; I cursed Wall Street, which had been the primal means of bringing me to this destitution. Oh, I tell you, gentlemen, that fury burned up at least five years of my life. I must have gesticulated extravagantly, for a guardian of the peace approached me.

"Monsieur has lost?" he inquired, mildly.

"What the devil is that to you?"

"Oh, I could find monsieur a ticket back to Paris, if he so desires."

"Cheaper than burying me here, eh? Well, you go along with you; I am not going to cut my throat this evening; nor to-morrow evening." And I made off toward the terrace.

I sat down on one of the seats, lit my last cigar, and contemplated the mysterious beauty of a Mediterranean night, or at least I tried to contemplate it. At this moment Monte Carlo seemed to me both a heaven and a hell. Unluckily, as I turned my head, I saw the glittering Temple of Fortune. I spat, cursing with renewed vigor. It was surprising how well I kept up this particular kind of monologue.

Where should I begin life anew? In the wheat country, in the cattle country, or in the mines? I had a good knowledge of minerals and the commercial value of each. It wasn't as if I had been brought up with a golden spoon.

I knew how to work, though I had never done a stroke outside of Wall Street. If only I had not mortgaged the estate! Useless recrimination! Bah! I had three days at the hotel. I could eat, and sleep, and bathe.

The band stopped; and it was then that I became conscious of a sound like that of sobbing. Across the path I discovered the figure of a woman. She was weeping on her arms which were thrown over the back of the seat. The spot was secluded. Just then some yacht below sent up a rocket which burst above us in a warm glow—it was the young woman I had seen at the table. I arose to approach her, when I saw something glittering at her feet. It proved to be a solitary louis. I stooped and picked it up, joyful at the chance of having an excuse to speak to the girl.

"Mademoiselle," I said, "you have dropped a louis."

"I, monsieur?—Oh!" Evidently she had recognized me. "I have dropped no gold here," striving to check the hiccoughs into which her soda had turned.

"But I found it close to your feet," I explained.

"It is not mine, monsieur; it is not mine! Leave me."

"You are in trouble?" I addressed this question in English.

"You are English?" as one who grasps at a straw.

"Almost; I am an American. I observed you at the Casino to-night. You have suffered some losses," I suggested, gently.

"That is my affair, sir!" with a sudden dignity.

"May I not offer you some aid?" I asked, forgetting that, if anything, I was worse off than she could possibly be. I turned the louis over and over. What a terrible thing gambling was! "My proposal is perfectly honorable. I am a gentleman. You have committed a folly to-night, a folly which you have never before committed and which doubtless you will never commit again. Where is your brother? Are you here alone, without masculine protection?"

"My brother?"

The rockets soared again; and the agony written on the girl's face excited something stronger than pity. I fumbled in a pocket and drew forth a card.

"My name is Chadwick; permit me —" Then I laughed insanely, even hysterically. "I beg your pardon! I was about to offer you material assistance. I haven't a penny in the world, and nothing of value save a pair of cuff buttons. In fact, I don't see how I am to leave this wretched place." This odd confession aroused her interest.

"You have lost all your money, too?"

Too! So I had read shrewdly. She was in the same predicament as myself.

"Yes. Won't you accept this louis?"

"A single louis?" She laughed wildly. "A single louis? What good would that do me?"

"But where is your brother?"

"He is ill at the hotel. Oh, I am the most unhappy woman in the world!" And her sobbing broke forth afresh.

"Pardon my former deception, but I understand German perfectly well."

"You?"

"Yes. I was a passenger on the same coach which brought you from Dieppe to Paris last fall. Perhaps you do not remember me; but I recollect the conversation between you and your brother. He has gambled away money which did not belong to him—even as I have gambled away my patrimony and the family roof."

"And I—and I have done the same thing! Thinking that perhaps I, having never gambled, might be lucky enough to win back what my brother lost, I have risked and lost the money realized on my jewels for passage home!"

"Use this louis to send home for money," I urged.

"I dare not, I dare not! My father would disown my brother; and I love my brother!"

Sisters, on the average, are very fond beings.

Suddenly she raised her despairing face to mine.

"You, you take the louis and play it; you!"

"I?"

"Yes, yes! Certainly it must be lucky. Play it, sir; play it!"

I caught her enthusiasm and excitement.

"I will play it only on one condition."

"What is that?" she asked, rising. There was a bit of distrust in her tones.

"That you shall——"

"Sir, you said that you were honorable!"

"Let me complete the sentence," said I. "The condition is that you shall stand beside me and tell me what to play."

She was silent.

"And that we shall share good fortune or bad."

"Good fortune or bad," she repeated. She hesitated for a moment, then made a gesture. "What matters it now? I will go with you, and do as you desire. I shall trust you. I believe you to be a gentleman. Come."

So together we returned to that fatal room, sought out the very table where we had suffered our losses.

"How old are you?" she asked, quietly.

"Twenty-nine."

"Play it, play it!" She flushed, and then grew as pale as the ivory ball itself.

"Make your game, gentlemen!" cried the croupier. A phantom grin spread over his face as he saw me. I laid the louis on 29. "The game is made!" The ball whirled toward fortune or ruin.

I shut my eyes, and became conscious of a grip like iron on my arm. It was the girl. Her lips were parted. You could see the whole iris, so widely were her eyes opened. So I stared down at her, at the ringless hand clinging to my arm. I simply would not look at the ball.

"Twenty-nine wins, black and odd!" sang out the croupier. He nodded at me, smiling. The croupier is always

gracious to those who win, strange as this may seem.

I made as though to sweep in the winnings, but the pressure on my arm stayed the movement.

"Leave it there, Mr. Chadwick; do not touch it!"

Ah, that blind Madonna! The number repeated, and the gold and bank notes which were pushed in my direction seemed like a fortune to me. I turned to her, expecting her to faint at the sight of this unprecedented luck. No! her face was as calm as that of one of the marble Venuses. But her hand was still tense upon my arm. As a matter of fact, my arm began to ache, but I dared not call her attention to it.

"Wait!" she said. "Skip one."

I did so.

"I am twenty-three; play a hundred louis on that number."

I placed the stake. My hands trembled so violently that the gold tumbled and rolled about the table. I gathered it quickly, and replaced it as the croupier bawled out that the game was made.

What a terrible moment that was! I have seen action on the battlefield, I have been in runaways, fires, railroad accidents, but I shall never again know the terror of that moment. How she ever stood it I don't know.

If you have played roulette you will have observed that sometimes the ball will sink to the lower rim, but will not drop into the little compartments intended for it; that is to say, that it will hang as if in midair, all the while making the circle. Well, the ball began to play us the agonizing trick. Twice it hung above 23; twice it threatened zero. Heavens! how I watched the ball, how the girl watched it, how all save the croupier watched it! Then it fell—23!

"Put it all on black," she whispered. It was like clairvoyance.

Black won; again, and again.

"Gentlemen, the bank is closed," said the croupier, smiling. He put the ball in the silver socket.

I had actually and incontestably (even inconceivably!) broken the bank! I

was, for the moment, dumfounded. How they crowded around us, the aristocrats, the half world, the confirmed gamblers, the sightseers and the bangers-on! From afar I could hear the music of the band. They were playing a *polonaise* of Chopin's. I was like one in a dream.

"They are asking you where to send the gold," she said.

"The gold? Oh, yes! to the hotel, to the hotel!" finding my senses.

An attendant put our winnings into a basket, and, in company with two guardians of the peace, or gendarmes, if you will call them so, preceded us to the hotel.

"To your brother's room?" I asked.

"At once! I feel as if I were about to faint. Mr. Chadwick, my name is Carruthers. Will you go to my brother's room with me and explain all this to him?"

I nodded, and was about to follow her with the attendant who still carried our gold, when a voice struck my ear, a voice which filled me with surprise, chagrin and terror.

"So, I have found you!"

A handsome woman of thirty-five stood at my side. Anger and wrath lay visibly written on her face and in her eyes. My sister! She did not appear to notice the young girl at my side, who instinctively shrank from me at the sound of my sister's voice.

"So, I have found you! I had a good mind to leave you here, you wretched boy! You have gambled away your patrimony, you have wasted over these abominable gaming tables the house in which we both were born. I have heard all; not a word of excuse! And yet I am here to give you money enough to reach home with. I heard all about you at Nice."

Notwithstanding my chagrin, I found my voice.

"My dear sister, I thank you for your assistance, but I do not need it. I have just this moment broken one of the banks at the Casino." I beckoned the attendant to approach. I lifted back the cover. My sister gasped.

"Merciful heavens! how much is in

there?" she asked, overcome at the sight of so much money. The sudden transition from wrath to amazement made me laugh.

"Something like seventy thousand, my dear Nan."

"Pounds?" she cried.

"Dollars."

"And who is this young woman?" suddenly, and with not unjust suspicion.

Miss Carruthers flushed. My sister had a way of being extraordinarily insolent upon occasion. But evidently Miss Carruthers came of equally distinguished blood. She lifted her head proudly and her eyes flashed.

"As I have no desire to enter into your family affairs," she said, haughtily to me, "I beg of you to excuse me." She made as though to leave.

"Wait!" I implored, striving to detain her. Somehow I felt that if she went I should never see her again.

"Let me go, Mr. Chadwick; I have only the kindest regards for you."

"But the money?"

"The money?" echoed my sister.

"Nan," said I, indignantly, "but for this young lady, who, I dare say, comes of as good a family as ours— Well, if it hadn't been for her you might have carried me home in a pine-box."

"Robert!" aghast.

"Miss Carruthers is a lady," I declared.

"Carruthers? You are English?" asked my sister, her frown smoothing. "You will certainly pardon me if I have been rude; but this brother of mine —"

"Is a very good gentleman," Miss Carruthers interrupted. "My name is now known to you; yours —"

"Is Lady —," with a tilt of the chin.

Miss Carruthers bent forward.

"Of Suffolk?"

"Yes— Merciful heavens! you are of the Carruthers who are my neighbors when I am at home! I know the judge, your father, well."

"My father!" The burden of her trouble came back to her, the reaction from the intense excitement of the pre-

ceding hour. She reached out her arms blindly, and would have fallen had not my sister caught her.

"You wretch!" she cried, "what have you been doing to this girl?"

"Don't be a fool, Nan! I haven't been doing anything. But don't let's have a scene here. Where's your room?"

We were still in the parlor of the hotel, and many curious glances were directed at us. The attendant had set down his heavy and precious burden, and was waiting patiently for further directions from me.

"Don't scold him," said Miss Carruthers; "for he has been very good to me." She stretched out a small, white hand, and I clasped it. "Mr. Chadwick, make me a solemn promise."

"What is it?" wondering.

"Promise me never to play games of chance again. Think of what might have happened if God hadn't been so good to us after our having been so bad."

I promised. Then we went to my sister's room, and the whole story came out.

The colonel abruptly concluded his narrative.

"Here, here!" we cried; "this will never do. What was the end?"

"What happened to young Carruthers?" I demanded, with the novelist's love for details.

"That wasn't his name," replied the colonel, smiling.

"And what became of the girl?" asked Fletcher. "You can't choke us off that way, Bob. What became of the girl?"

"Seventy thousand dollars; I believe you're coddling us a whole lot," said Collingwood.

"You're a fakir if you don't tell us what became of the girl," Fletcher again declared.

"Very well," laughed the colonel; "I'm a fakir."

But the very ease with which he acknowledged this confirmed my suspicions that he had told only the plain truth. At this moment the butler ap-

peared in the doorway, and we all arose.

"Madam desires me to announce that dinner is served."

The Scotch and the brandy saved the colonel any further embarrassment; we were all ravenously hungry. On our way to the drawing-room where we were to join the ladies, Fletcher began hoping for a clear, cold day for the morrow; and the colonel escaped.

It was my happiness to take in the hostess that night. She was toying with her wineglass, when I observed that the bracelet on her beautiful arm had a curious bangle.

"I thought bangles *passé*," I said.

"This isn't a fad." She extended her

arm or the bracelet (I don't know which) for my inspection.

"Why," I exclaimed, breathlessly, "it is a miniature French louis!" A thousand fancies flooded my brain.

"Look," she said. She touched a spring, and the bangle opened, discovering the colonel's youthful face.

"How came you to select a louis for a bangle?" I asked.

"That is a secret."

"Oh, if it's a secret, far be it that I should strive to peer within. The colonel is a lucky dog. If I were half as lucky, I shouldn't be writing novels for a living."

"Who knows?" she murmured, a far-away light in her glorious eyes.



THE CAMPANILE

OUR souls shook with thy passing from our sight,
 Lone tower, that o'er the crowds thy vigil kept,
 Telling the waves thy dreams, while cities slept,
 Floating thy song of bells across the night;
 Or waking work and prayer, when morning's light
 Up through the glimmering sea streets softly crept,
 While the sad deep round crumbling Venice wept
 O'er ancient hopes of unreturning night.

Ah, thou wast weary, gazing o'er the tide,
 For gleam of sails, and flash of sovran oar
 Out of the dark returning home with pride
 And pomp of conquest grappled for thy sake,
 Till the brave heart, with yearning, in thee brake,
 Crushed by thy city's sorrowing "Nevermore."

LAUCHLAN MACLEAN WATT.

THE CRUISE OF THE "DORA BASSETT"

By Joseph C. Lincoln

THE pride of Mr. Solomon Pratt was founded upon two accomplishments and a possession.

The first accomplishment was his cooking, for he could make "spider bread" and clam chowder to suit the taste of the most exacting epicure on the Cape. The second accomplishment was his ability to handle his sailboat, the *Dora Bassett*. The possession was the *Dora Bassett* herself.

From the first of March to the middle of April every moment of his spare time had been spent in the beautifying of the wonderful craft.

She had been painted, first white, then a light blue with crimson trimmings, and then white again, because Solomon's opinion, backed by those of his numerous professional advisers, had been that white was becoming to her style of beauty. Her name was blazoned in gilt letters upon her stern; the ornamental work upon her bow was gilt also; her clumsy tiller had been replaced by a wheel, varnished until it shone like her owner's nose.

She was a Phoenix rising from the ashes, the immortal and glorified soul of the sun-warped and abandoned hulk that Mr. Pratt had purchased for fifteen dollars of Barney Eldredge in August two years before. It is true that her sails were old, but they were patched and darned wherever they could be, and if her ropes were old likewise it was because Solomon's money gave out after he bought the new pennant for her masthead and the Stars and Stripes for her gaff.

She cut across Orham Bay like a scared chipmunk along a stone wall, and ran alongside the wharf with the flourish of a mettlesome cob pulling up at a Fifth Avenue curb.

"Looks's fit's a fiddle, Sol," observed Mr. "Bluey" Bachelder, who was fishing for flounders with no expectation of catching any, but because it looked as if he was working.

"How's them halyards? Seems ter me they look sorter rotten," commented "Squealer" Burgess, who was helping "Bluey."

"Them halyards is all right," snarled the skipper of the *Dora Bassett*, touched on a sore spot. "How's the beds in the lockup, Squealer?"

Mr. Burgess had celebrated Patriots' Day in a too enthusiastic manner, and had, in consequence, been given a night's lodging by the town authorities.

"Bluey," the diplomat, cut in here to stave off hostilities.

"Who yer goin' ter take out ter-day, Sol?" he asked.

"Passel of boarders from the Ocean House. That Vanderdeck gal and Billy Dayton, and that I-talian operry feller. Goin' over ter Ha'f Way Pint fer a chowder and then down to Setucket and back ag'in. All day job."

"They tell me," said "Bluey," "that Dayton and the Vanderdeck gal's goin' ter be married."

"Don't be so durn sure of that," remarked "Squealer," "I onderstand the I-talian's cuttin' quite a swath in that d'rection. Say, they tell me that feller

gits twenty-five hundred dollars a week for jest singin'. Dayton's purty well fixed, but twenty-five hundred a week—a week, mind yer! Gosh! I'd sing the rest of my life fer that!"

"They'd pay you more ter shut up," said Mr. Pratt, tartly. "Sh-h! Here they be."

The Ocean House buckboard drew up at the fish-house and the party came down the wharf; Billy Dayton, twenty-five, white duck trousers, blue coat, yachting cap; Miss Vanderdeck, twenty, white yachting suit, white cap; Signor Giulio Dominico Ecli, shady side of thirty-five, yachting suit also, curls, waxed mustache, swagger, diamonds, splendid to look upon.

"Here we are," said Mr. Dayton; "now, Agnes, are you ready? Look out for those steps. Here, take my hand."

"It ees the ship," said the signor. "Behold the swanboat and the Lohengrin. Mees Vanderdeck, may I the honair have? Ah, thanks! thanks! Your hand, signora! So! So! Behold it ees accomplish!"

And it was, with a flourish. Miss Vanderdeck was seated upon the cushion in the stern of the *Dora Bassett*. Signor Ecli seated himself beside her. Billy Dayton, still looking in a dazed sort of way at the hand that had been extended but not taken, descended and sat on the opposite side of the cockpit; no cushion there.

And now uprose Capt. Solomon Pratt, skipper of the *Dora Bassett*, treading his own quarterdeck and dreaming it that of a fifteen-hundred-ton clipper.

"Pass down them baskets, Burgess. Easy now! Now t'other one, Bachelor! So! All shipshape and above-board? Good! Stand by!"

A push with the boat hook, a flutter of the sails—the *Dora Bassett* was already halfway across the Narrows, bound out.

"Good-looking craft you have here, skipper," said Mr. Dayton, trying to look as if sailboats were everyday playthings in Dakota, where his father's wheat fields stretched from horizon to horizon.

"Good lookin' and good doin'," said Solomon. "Ain't nothin' in this harbor can git near enough ter read her name. 'Mornin', Lige!" This in a yell to the lightkeeper at Goose Island.

"It is a beautiful boat, Capt. Pratt," said Miss Vanderdeck. "How do you keep it so clean and white?"

"Elbow grease and jedgment, ma'am; elbow grease and jedgment. Six of one and ha'f dozen of t'other. Have yer any boats like this in your country, Mr. Ickley?"

"Like this? No. But boats? Yes. You the fisher boats of Genoa have seen, Mees Vanderdeck? No? Not the fisher boats of Genoa at the sunseting with the red gold their sails upon? And the gondolas of Venice in the moon's light with the palaces of Venice and the songs of the gondoliers! Ha! Eet is the opera! The opera eetself!"

"How is them gonderleers rigged, Mister Eckley?" inquired the skipper. "Catboat fashion, or do they carry a ji'boom?"

"Ah, the songs of the gondoliers, Mees Vanderdeck!" continued the signor, ignoring the interruption. "My countrymen can sing, signora. Shall I for you sing the little gondolier ditty?"

"Oh, do, signor, it would be heavenly."

"Ah well, eet should not be sung here in the cold sunlight, but at night, in Venice, the moon beneath. But——"

"Singing in the open air is bad for the voice, isn't it, signor?" asked Mr. Dayton. "I should think you'd be afraid to risk it."

"For the voice bad? Yes, a leetle. But when Mees Vanderdeck begs, who shall riffuse? So, then for the song of the gondolier. Imagine, if you please, Mees Vanderdeck, that you and I are afloat in the gondola, and the moon ees shining and the gondolier behind us sings—thus so."

It was singing! When one of the best tenors in grand opera sings even Mr. Solomon Pratt is glad to listen.

"Godfrey scissors!" he ejaculated, when it was over. "That's music! I'd

like ter have you hear Obed Nickerson play the fiddle, mister; you'd appreciate it."

"Let's have some college songs, 'Agnes," said Billy Dayton. "I brought my banjo."

"College songs and a banjo after that! Billy, I'm ashamed of you. Tell me more about Italy, signor."

Altogether it was rather a lonely forenoon to Mr. Dayton. He was glad when Half Way Point was reached and luncheon time came. One may enjoy Solomon Pratt's clam chowder and hot "spider bread," not to mention claret and a cigar, although the lady of one's choice does address her conversation almost exclusively to a stout and middle-aged foreigner; that is, one may enjoy the eatables mentioned if he has as healthy an appetite as Billy Dayton's.

The afternoon sail to Setucket was, so Miss Vanderdeck declared, delightful. The signor vowed it "adorable." Even Solomon went so far as to state that he "didn't know's he had ever made a better run." Mr. Dayton's feelings were not given to the public. When the anchor was dropped in the cove by the life-saving station, and the members of the party were getting into the skiff, which had been towed behind the boat, the skipper said:

"You folks can make a landin' here, but yer mustn't stay long. The tide's beginnin' ter go out and we'll need all the water there is ter git home in. Besides, them clouds over there means fog, and wind, too, I cal'late; so hurry back. I'll stay 'long the beach here and dig a few clams."

There was the life-saving station to be inspected and the surf along the ocean side of the point to be exclaimed over. The signor offered his arm to Miss Vanderdeck and it was accepted. To Mr. Dayton was accorded the necessary but unexhilarating duty of carrying the shawls, parasol and camera. Miss Vanderdeck said she was much interested in the station, and the signor butchered the English language in his attempts to express his feelings. The lady talked to the signor and the sig-

nor talked to the lady. The polite captain of the life-savers at first talked to the party in general, but at length gave it up and explained the uses of the "breeches buoy" and other paraphernalia to Billy exclusively.

Solomon Pratt had dug two buckets of clams and smoked three pipefuls of tobacco when Mr. Dayton appeared strolling disconsolately over the sand hills. To the skipper's question he replied that the others were watching the surf.

"Sho! Two's company, three's a crowd, hey?" said Solomon. "I jedged that's the way 'twas. Women is queer fish, and that's a fact. Well, they'll have ter hurry, 'cause we can't stay here much longer. Ought ter started 'fore this. Look at that fog bank."

But it was a full hour before Miss Vanderdeck and the gentleman whose salary was twenty-five hundred a week hove in sight, arm in arm and apparently on the best of terms with each other. Solomon's temper was worn to a razor edge by this time, and he sputtered like a soda bottle.

"Lovely surf, hey? Well, we'll be lucky if we don't see some more lovely surf 'fore we're done! Tide's two hours out now, fog's comin' up and it's a dead beat home. Roust up for'ard there, mister, and hoist the jib. There! Dangnation! Aground fust thing!"

The *Dora Bassett* ran her nose into two more sandbars before she cleared Setucket cove. Then came the fog, thick and heavy, and she struck once more, this time for a thirty-minute stay on the edge of the channel well out in the bay. Mr. Pratt's language, when he finally poled her into deep water, was devoid of frills.

"One er you fellers'll have to go up for'ard and keep an eye out for shoals. Lively now! It'll be dark pretty quick and there's wind a-comin'."

The signor was engrossed in describing to Miss Vanderdeck the glories of his native country, so Billy Dayton went forward. It grew dark rapidly, and although the sailboat was making good progress, she was miles from Or-

ham Harbor. Suddenly the skipper shouted:

"Hark! D'yer hear that? There's a squall comin'. Down with the jib. Haul on that rope. No, no! T'other one! T'other one! Godfrey scissors! Here you, Mister—Mister Whatsyer-name, hang on ter that wheel! Keep her jest as she is!"

And forcing the spokes into the hands of the astonished opera singer, Solomon tumbled forward to assist the bewildered Billy, who was busily trying to cast loose the peak halyard under the impression that it ought to belong to the jib.

The fog split into shreds. The black water turned white. The *Dora Bassett* heeled over wildly and the astonished signor, with a scream, let go of the wheel and pitched headfirst into Miss Vanderdeck's lap. Solomon Pratt, his whole weight swinging on the jib downhaul, hung over the side, vainly struggling to regain his balance.

Alas for Mr. Pratt's love for ornament and his parsimonious dealing with the essentials! The downhaul, like most of the ropes on the *Dora Bassett*, was old and rotten. It parted and the skipper went overboard with a howl and a splash.

If you should ask Mr. Dayton exactly what happened immediately after that, he probably could not tell you. He remembers tumbling into the cockpit where Miss Vanderdeck sat white and mute, and where the Italian gentleman was rolling from side to side and damaging his beautiful tenor voice by a series of shrill screams. He remembers, too, that the sailboat seemed desirous of lying down upon its side on the water for a rest, a feat that it might have accomplished had not another rope broken and the gaff dropped halfway down the mast, while the mainsail flapped furiously.

Then from somewhere astern came a wrathful, sputtering yell:

"Godfrey scissors!" bellowed Solomon Pratt. "Of all the dum fools that ever I— You wait till I git aboard."

"Where is he?" gasped Miss Vanderdeck. "Oh, where is he?"

The skiff that towed behind the sailboat was violently agitated and Mr. Pratt's head, dripping and furious, appeared over its rail. He had caught the little craft with one hand as he came to the surface and was now trying to clamber in.

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Billy Dayton, "do they always do that—sailboats, I mean?"

"Always do—oh, sufferin' hook-blocks! If ever I go ter sea ag'in with a passel of— Catch a holt of that wheel! Bring her into the wind! Cast off that mainsheet! Cast it off!" His voice rose to a shriek. "Here comes another one!"

Now mainsheets are unknown quantities in Dakota. Billy Dayton begged for more light.

"That rope at the stern. Cast it off! Lively!"

There were two or three ropes at the stern, and Mr. Dayton cast off one of them as fast as his inexperienced fingers would work. Then the second gust struck them and the *Dora Bassett* drove off in a swooping half circle, the end of the boom trailing in the water, the spray flying across the cockpit and a liberal supply stopping by the way to drench the manly form of the sweet singer from Italy. From behind came a chorus of shouted adjectives that in fury rivaled the squall itself. It is a humiliating confession, but in his eagerness to obey orders concerning the mainsheet, Mr. Dayton had cast off the skiff's painter and Solomon Pratt was disconnected with his base of supplies.

"Oh, Billy! Oh, Billy!" said Miss Vanderdeck.

"Thunderation!" said Mr. Dayton.

Signor Ecli continued to scream shrilly. From afar in the darkness came the hail:

"Put—yer—hellum—over—ter—labb'ard!"

"Over where?" yelled the gentleman from Dakota.

"Over—ter—labb'ard! Put—it—over—ter—labb'ard!"

"What part of the blessed thing is labb'ard?" muttered Mr. Dayton, nerv-

ously; then he appealed once more to the source of information.

"I don't know what you mean!" he screamed.

"What—d'yer—say?"

"I don't know what you mean."

"Turn—the—wheel—over—ter—labb'ard. Labb'ard—yer—lubber! Labb'ard!"

"Well, I know what the wheel is, at any rate!" mused Billy. "We'll have to prospect for 'labb'ard,' I reckon. Here goes!"

He spun the wheel entirely around and the boom shot over their heads, taking his hat with it. The *Dora Bassett* heeled over on another circuitous zigzag, more water came in and the boat seemed anxious to rest again.

"Jiminy!" said Mr. Dayton, "that won't do!" And he whirled the wheel part way back again. Miss Vanderdeck clung to the rail, while the signor performed most undignified acrobatic feats about the centerboard well.

"I—can't—do—it!" shrieked Billy. "It—don't—work! Are—you—drowned?"

The voice that answered was farther away, but it was not that of a dying man.

"Think—everybody—else—is—a—dum—lubber—jest—'cause—you—be?" it wailed. "Never—mind—me. Keep—her—jest's—she—is. Yer'll—fetch—up—all—right. Better—take—reef—slack—that—main—"

And as Hamlet observes, the rest was silence, that is, so far as Mr. Pratt was concerned.

Mr. Dayton continued to shout for a time, and then, finding it useless, bent his energies toward keeping the boat on an even keel. The broken gaff served the purpose of a double reef, although no one on board knew it, and the mainsheet being tangled and the boom end therefore just clear of the waves, the *Dora Bassett* drove on in the wind and darkness.

Hour after hour went by. Billy Dayton clung to the wheel for dear life, not daring to let it turn a spoke. Miss Vanderdeck, beyond asking to be in-

formed as to just when they would sink, made no remarks. The signor sat on the floor of the cockpit, clinging to the centerboard well and muttering prayers in his native language. Incidentally he was unheroically seasick.

"Whew!" said Mr. Dayton, finally, "we must have sailed to the North Pole. This night isn't a minute less than six months long, and we've been going like fun all the time and haven't hit land yet."

"Billy," said Miss Vanderdeck, "do you suppose we have gone the wrong way and are out at sea? I have read of people drifting around in a boat like this for days and days and starving to death. That would be horrible!"

"Oh, I guess it isn't as bad as that. Besides, I believe the usual rule is for people in that situation to eat one another. I'm sure the signor is gallant enough to be the first volunteer item on the bill of fare. How about it, signor?"

But the signor was in no mood for jokes. He did not attempt to rise, but he disengaged one hand from the centerboard well long enough to extend a fist that shook with cold as well as with indignation.

"Meester Dayton," he sputtered, "I demand to be eeanstantly put on land. All night have I suffered in silence because of your carelessness, imbecile. My life ees in peril, my voice—oh, Mother of Saints! My voice will be r-r-ruin. I am wet with water. I demand to be eemediate placed on land."

"Only too happy to oblige, signor," said the imperturbable Dayton, "if you will provide the land."

"Bah!" snorted the suffering opera singer. "Fool that I was to come to this accursed country where there are none but idiots and plebeians. Do you hear me, sir? I am wet! I am cold! I have hoarseness in my tubes. Bring your lunatic boat to shore."

He was by this time so carried away by his sense of outraged dignity that he actually stood up, but the boat lurched and he subsided to his former position where for fifteen minutes, or until he

was exhausted, he gave oracular vent to that temper which was the standing joke of the Continental papers.

Miss Vanderdeck, wrapped in Billy Dayton's topcoat, heard him and shivered. She shivered again when the owner of the topcoat observed in an aside:

"What a happy little home his boarding place must be."

The wind went down, the morning broke, and found the *Dora Bassett*, by virtue of pure luck and nothing else, hard and fast aground on the beach of a little bay. A bewhiskered native with a bucket and a clam hoe appeared and assisted the party ashore.

"Where are we?" asked Mr. Dayton.

"Well," answered the grinning native, "you're about two miles this side of Wellmouth Port."

"Great Scott!" said the gentleman from Dakota. "Twenty miles from Orham!"

The signor smiled and waved his hat; the signor bowed low; Richard was himself again.

"Behold!" he said. "We have deescovered America. Mees Vanderdeck, permit me to offer you my arm."

But the young lady turned to Mr. Dayton.

"Billy," she said, "please take me somewhere. I'm—I'm tired."

And this time it was the signor who carried the wraps.

At four o'clock that afternoon Billy Drayton, weary but exalted, held converse in the lee of the fish-house at Orham with one Solomon Pratt.

"Thought I was drowned, did yer?" snorted the latter. "Well, when I git drowned with a skiff under me and an oar in my hand 'twon't be in Setucket Bay. What I want ter know is who's goin' ter pay me fer the damages ter my boat and fer my time. I've tele-

graphed to Wellmouth and they tell me it'll cost forty dollars to fix her up and take a month besides. You're a hero up to the hotel, I hear. Well, wait till I tell 'em how, 'stead of keepin' her as she was, 'cordin' ter orders, yer sailed all night right alongside the beach—not ha'f a mile from it—and fetched up twenty mile from home. Why, there wan't no time in the last five hours that yer couldn't have jumped overboard and waded ashore. Hero! Plaguey lubber! That's what I'd say!"

"Is that true?" gasped Mr. Dayton.

"True! course it's true."

The newly crowned hero, fresh from his triumph at the hotel, with the glory of Miss Vanderdeck's parting words still ringing in his ears, scratched his head thoughtfully. He was deliberating.

"Pratt," he said, at length, "you say it will take a month to fix up your boat and that the fixing will cost forty dollars. Well, I'll pay the forty. Then there's your time, call it fifteen dollars a week and board, I'll pay that. I'll pay the whole thing, provided you go to Wellmouth and superintend the job yourself."

Solomon whistled. He, too, was deliberating.

"There's that matter of casting off the skiff's painter 'stead of the mainsheet," he said, slowly. "Redic'ulous thing ter do. I cal'late the folks at the hotel would laff some if they knew it. Maybe yer told 'em, but—"

"Make it twenty dollars more. That's the last cent."

"All right, Mr. Dayton. I'll take yer offer. I'll go termorrer."

"You'll go to-day," said Billy Dayton, "and I'll go with you as far as the station."

The *Dora Bassett* actually glitters with gold paint this year.

THE AMERICAN HUSBAND

By Gertrude Atherton

Author of "The Conqueror," "Senator North," "American Wives and English Husbands"

SOME months ago an American woman who spent much of her time in Europe enjoying the liberty of the divided household, said to an acquaintance of mine: "I have nothing against my husband; he is a very good fellow, indulgent, and all that, but I think I'll get a divorce; I want to marry a title." She had not even selected the title; but secure in her purchasing power, she has returned to the United States and begun suit for divorce. As the defendant has given proof in the past that he is one of the adjustable American husbands, we may expect in the course of a year or two to see another fortune disappear into the yawning coffers of Europe.

These two people belong to what has come to be the most famous matrimonial type in this country. As a matter of fact, the type is a small one, and merely represents the hundreds whose bulk of money floats them conspicuously above their eighty millions of compatriots. But if small in numbers, so great in consequence has this type been made by the press—whose humblest readers cannot get enough of its doings—that it has almost come to be regarded as synonymous with Americanism itself.

When people abroad open up, the subject of your country to you it is either of this class they speak or of those who go on strike. Although they will not admit that we have an aristocracy in the European sense of the term, neither do they seem able to comprehend that we have an enormous middle class. To them we are one huge problem of mass against class—upper class

composed to its uttermost thousand of plutocrats whose untold millions keep the people in a perpetual state of envy and hatred. Of course we all know how much the workingman loves his employer, and recall the periodicity of his drastic measures to force him to terms; but we also know that the millions between live their lives through with an occasional spasm of envy, but with no rancor against the excessively rich, whose doings make interesting reading, and whose wealth, after all, flows out through many channels. The vast army of smaller professional men—lawyers, doctors, engineers, teachers, and the like; the bank clerks, the retail merchants, the country storekeepers, are not the stuff out of which a French Revolution will be made in this country, and they are far more representative than either the republican aristocracy, or the rampant democracy.

Every city is pre-eminently a city of homes, and the homes are, for the most part, best described by the old-fashioned word, "genteel." There are millions and millions and millions of them, of all shapes and sizes and degree, and not only in the cities, but in the countless towns and hamlets. Take a village like Oxford, New York, with its rows of pretty and handsome homes behind shaded streets, many of them inherited. The place is steeped in contentment; hale old men of ninety are to be met at every turn, no hamlet in Europe could afford a more complete contrast to New York and Chicago. It is another "America," one that the foreign critic never sees and cannot imagine, yet it is far more numerous than the

breathless centers—and equally “American.”

It is in these millions of typical homes that the typical American husband can be found, if there be such a thing. In the very wealthy classes the women are spoiled, beyond doubt, as wealthy women are all over the world, only in a different fashion; for the American is more indulgent by nature than the hard and fixed types of Europe. As to our lower classes, as we rejoice in every variety of Europe's scum, their domestic proclivities are hardly pertinent to this article.

But I very much doubt if a prevailing type can be found even in a class with so much in common as the middle. The average American looks upon women with something of the indulgence of a patient father, and is usually polite and kind—not, however, when he is scrambling at the rush hour for a train on the Manhattan Elevated Road or for accommodation beneath the Brooklyn Bridge. Then he is a savage, neither more nor less. He forgets woman, civilization, ambition, religion, learning, and deportment. His face is set and hideous. His brain and soul shrink to the dimensions of the withered kernel of a filbert and is filled with but one raging desire—a seat in a car! All striving, honest and dishonest, all the daily grind and rush for wealth and power, all flamboyant patriotism, come down to only this, twice in every day. Twice in every day millions of New Yorkers, Chicagoans, and I know not of what other American cities, are dehumanized, made hideous within and without, willing to trample women and children under foot, forgetful of every maxim their boasted Christianity has taught them—is this the reason they no longer go to church?—and for what? A greater waste of energy than they expend during the entire day. If they walked they would save themselves. This daily pandemonium is one of the most disgraceful phases of American life and one of the most demoralizing.

These men may be mild and indulgent at home, but I doubt it. Such an emotion as twice a day expresses it-

self in their frightful countenances—strained, contorted, fixed, brutal—must in time affect the temper, the whole character; and this variety at least of the much-vaunted American husband will soon need a shrew to keep him in place. Moreover, he will grow uglier every year, and the following generations will suffer accordingly. (Something like a million Greater New Yorkers take part in this daily mob.) And if he is ready for murder twice a day, except on Sundays, when he must sleep the long dreamless sleep of exhaustion, will he not, under a stress, murder with less compunction than his brother of Baltimore or Washington?

But here, again, are but a comparative handful in our American life. Beyond are the tens of thousands of cities, towns and villages which have already been alluded to, where life is not strenuous, where man lives to old age and wrinkles late, and rarely has the opportunity to discover all the evil that is in him. In San Francisco, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, Washington, to mention but a few of the larger cities, you are even permitted to sit down before the car starts, and although to the casual thinker this may seem a trifle, it is indeed portentous, and typical of a life that is almost as simple and easy as any that can be found in Europe. In San Francisco, for instance, it means that the conductor is unharassed and polite, that he never upsets a woman's nerves and threatens her self-respect by shouting at her as if she were a cow in front of an engine; that a man rarely sits while a woman stands; that the average citizen's courtesy is unshattered by breakneck speed of any sort, much less a daily struggle in a mob; in other words, that his manners and his temper are far better than is possible where life is congested, utterly selfish, and breathless. He has repose of manner; that is to say, he does not look as if his entire network of nerves might burst into view at any moment. In Chicago and New York we have the yellowest press. The San Francisco *Examiner* is infinitely less offensive than the New York *Journal* or the Chicago *Ameri-*

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These men may be mild and indulgent at home, but I doubt it. Such an emotion as twice a day expresses it-

self in their frightful countenances—strained, contorted, fixed, brutal—must in time affect the temper, the whole character; and this variety at least of the much-vaunted American husband will soon need a shrew to keep him in place. Moreover, he will grow uglier every year, and the following generations will suffer accordingly. (Something like a million Greater New Yorkers take part in this daily mob.) And if he is ready for murder twice a day, except on Sundays, when he must sleep the long dreamless sleep of exhaustion, will he not, under a stress, murder with less compunction than his brother of Baltimore or Washington?

But here, again, are but a comparative handful in our American life. Beyond are the tens of thousands of cities, towns and villages which have already been alluded to, where life is not strenuous, where man lives to old age and wrinkles late, and rarely has the opportunity to discover all the evil that is in him. In San Francisco, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, Washington, to mention but a few of the larger cities, you are even permitted to sit down before the car starts, and although to the casual thinker this may seem a trifle, it is indeed portentous, and typical of a life that is almost as simple and easy as any that can be found in Europe. In San Francisco, for instance, it means that the conductor is unharassed and polite, that he never upsets a woman's nerves and threatens her self-respect by shouting at her as if she were a cow in front of an engine; that a man rarely sits while a woman stands; that the average citizen's courtesy is unshattered by breakneck speed of any sort, much less a daily struggle in a mob; in other words, that his manners and his temper are far better than is possible where life is congested, utterly selfish, and breathless. He has repose of manner; that is to say, he does not look as if his entire network of nerves might burst into view at any moment. In Chicago and New York we have the yellowest press. The San Francisco *Examiner* is infinitely less offensive than the New York *Journal* or the Chicago *Ameri-*

can; even the eye is irritated by no such front page monstrosities.

Naturally, in these great metropolises, it follows that men are suspicious, abrupt, irritable, either nervous in manner or frigid with the effort not to be, almost devoid of subtlety in regard to women, lacking in depth of intellectuality as distinct from mere brain. They cannot be blamed. They are the product of the terrible "hustle" and never-slackening competition of these crowded centers which epitomize the more famous conditions of the New World. And they are making history, the prosperity of the country, doing each the work of twenty men of a calmer sphere. But they must be highly uninteresting as husbands. A man who eats his luncheon with a telephone on his table, whose mental faculties are on the rack from nine till six, who looks upon every man as his natural enemy, whose keenest sense is an appreciation of the value and the values of money, must be either stupid or cross when the day's work is done. If he lets his wife spend half of her year alone in Europe, it is not likely that he misses her, and the signing of domestic checks is a trifle in his mighty calculations. He is a martyr to more than dyspepsia, for he works eternally for that which he never accomplishes, and the ultimate of leisure is the one thing he never contemplates. He has no time to know his wife, nor the other woman, for that matter, and if he gets little in return, at least he rarely is aware of the fact. The vastly rich often take quite a bourgeois pleasure in their home life, for they can make others live the wild existence downtown for them; but, on the other hand, with a lessening of financial responsibilities and excitement, with a larger leisure, with a surfeit of all that money can buy, come ennui and a preference for the neighbor's wife. Hence the notorious number of divorces in "high life"—which, however, only appears large until set against the roll call of our seventy-eight millions. To be sure, some of these get divorces also, but, as a rule, not from ennui or caprice. As long as human nature en-

dures, it is not likely that man and woman will cease to tire, drink, desert, bicker, and fail to provide.

But even the men who whirl in the maelstrom, telephone in hand, are in the minority. Beyond a doubt, it is in the huge bulk of the middle class, both in and out of the strenuous cities, that not only the "typical" husband is to be found, but the largest measure of domestic contentment. In these millions of respectable homes, just above the grind and pinch of poverty, many a man is common, overbearing, selfish, dull, but the mass of him lives an even and amiable life, moderately indulgent to his family, and repaying the unintermittent sacrifices of his wife with much consideration, even while accepting them as inevitable. He loves his home and takes a deep interest in his children, being not above walking the floor with them at night, nor wheeling them in the perambulator. If he works unceasingly it is to educate them properly, and leave his family provided for at his death. There may be an occasional scene when bills come in, for the American man expects the impossible of the American wife, more in the matter of economics than is in the power of mortal woman outside of France; but this is an indirect compliment that no doubt the wife appreciates.

This American husband may not be peculiarly interesting as an individual, but, on the whole, he is more interesting than his wife; his range is wider, he reads his newspaper, discusses affairs with other men; and anything under heaven is more vivid conversational material than the recurring incidents of the domestic life, varied with the small affairs of one's neighbors. A woman absorbed from morning till night in servants, babies, and making both ends meet, has little, poor thing, to bring to the conversational mill. Or if the income be larger, she may be delicate, or interested in the "society" of her own little world, or, worse still, belong to clubs with a view to making intellect. If her husband treat her with infinite patience, it is all

she can expect, and if he finds his diversion with men, she has much to be thankful for. She may weary of life, but if she does, let her console herself with the reflection that so do women in every sphere under heaven.

For this is the point: The vast majority of women are here for no other reason than to produce men to keep the world going. Nobody in the long run gets more or less than his deserts. Women who can have careers, have them. Women who have unusual gifts, have an entirely different relationship to life from the domestic woman; for with talents goes the inherent force which gives them expression in spite of all obstacles. Those who fail are not worthy to succeed. The world had no use for their slender endowment. They had better have raised men, and women to produce other men. But there are increasing millions of women, in this country alone, who are working with or without distinction in an independent life, made possible by an extra supply of brain, independence, and energy. A trifle less of these endowments and they, too, would be fulfilling the original destiny of woman, and thankful for a man to support them. They have troubles, struggles, bitter disappointments, which they succumb to or overcome according to the forces within them; but, on the whole, they are the least bored of their sex, the least inclined to hazard the inevitable boredom of matrimony. For that matrimony contains vast reaches of boredom, the most fortunate will not deny. Constant companionship is the greatest of earthly trials; but Nature, the all-wise, has made the great majority of her beings commonplace, so limited in the range of their desires that they seldom know the extent of the more subtle afflictions.

But those who deliberately marry, and can do no better by abandoning that state, have no logical right to complain. If they could do better they would be doing it. Let no one nurse that flattering illusion that she was born for better things. If she were she would go out and get them. But these illusions and delusions rarely last out a lifetime.

Every woman knows sooner or later her limitations, for the lessons of life are writ so plainly that even the blind can read them in time; and if she is providing the world with its necessary fuel, and bringing it up properly, she may, and doubtless does, console herself with the reflection that she is nature's favorite, the normal woman, the one indispensable variety of her sex. A female reformer's remarkable amendment to present civilization—to have all the infants confiscated by the government and brought up in institutions on scientific principles—might do very well for the children, particularly in this country, where they are often made insufferable little beasts by over-indulgence; but what would become of the women? Few were born for any other vocation. It is to be hoped that a wise government will let them alone. Nature gives them their little dream of love—the trite little romance which we novelists try so hard to idealize—and, blind with its delusions, they sign the ever-ready contract and march to her tune. Let them realize this and waste less of their energies on rebellion.

Occasionally, the woman of unusual ability who has made the almost inevitable mistake of matrimony when young, has a striking opportunity given her for egress. In fact, sooner or later the opportunity to readjust one's self to life always does come, and the strong take advantage of it. Those who do not—who think, it would be more correct to say, that this chance never comes to them—have but one place in life and are occupying it. A curious case in point happened within my recent knowledge. A Southern girl of good family decided after her graduation to follow a natural bent and go on the stage. She was pretty, clever, fascinating, vital, and refined in mind and bearing. Moreover, she had talent. Her first year was successful, and high-class work was expected of her. Then came the usual episode. She fell in love. Being a girl of the most correct principles, she married. The young man, being one of those masterful husbands, of whom

there are far more in this country than a generalizing world will believe, would have no more of the stage; and she, being in the early throes, where love is all and art is naught, submitted. He was a doctor, practicing in Galveston. He took her there, and for several years she presided over a charming home and bore two equally charming children. But art sleeps so long and no longer. If it is in-born, not the temporary product of vanity, it is an ego by itself, and will possess the brain in time, just as inherited tuberculosis will possess the body. Hers awoke, and with it the desire for expression, for the excitement which invariably accompanies the gift to charm the multitude, for liberty, and all that the independent life means. But she had been brought up in an orthodox school, and she had no excuse to leave her husband. She plunged into society and became one of the prominent figures in the little city. This at best, however, is a miserable makeshift. No artist can be contented with the hollowest of all substitutes very long. Then came a terrible deliverance. The great storm and flood of 1900 burst upon the city by the Gulf and nearly swept it out of existence. Only her own restless prescience saved her. Her house was by the water, but all her neighbors laughed at her fears. Her own—or was it her superior imagination?—were too strong, and she persuaded her husband to flee to the higher ground. Her neighbors laughed as they departed, each carrying a child. She never saw any of them again. The worst of the storm was even then upon them. Both she and her husband had to run for their lives, while every house behind them was swept off the face of the earth. She lost one of the children temporarily, and nearly died of grief and exposure. But she was young and strong, and swiftly recovered. Then it was that her opportunity came. Her husband's practice was ruined, for the good reason that most of his patients were dead; what buildings he had owned were in splinters, his real estate valueless. He was a poor man and must begin life over again. More-

over, his health was far more affected by the disaster than his wife's. She announced at once that she should return to the stage, and support the children—him, if necessary, until he was on his feet again. She placed the children with her mother, came to New York, and in an incredibly short time was sending money to Galveston. To-day she is leading woman in one of the year's most successful productions. There is not a chance that she will leave the stage again, and if she did, after her brilliant justification of her ambition and talents, and the inherent power shown in seizing the right moment of escape, she would deserve the utmost ennu of which matrimony is capable.

People in this world are permitted to accomplish great things or small, exactly in proportion to their power of usefulness. The famous of the earth work like hod-carriers, and are ornamental in the eyes of the uninitiated only. The moment their usefulness ceases, Nature flings them aside like an old glove, whether they be quondam breeders, makers of books or laws, regenerators of morals, or revolutionists of the destinies of the world. Every man and woman is useful in some way, generally to the utmost of his capacity. If he misses the great rewards, the sole reason lies in that fact that he is a small tool, not a big one. But no man or woman that has lived has ever been anything but a tool, a servant, an atom of power in Nature's complex plan. No wonder there are so many religions, in other words, so many dreams of distant and better worlds. But it is safe to assume that Nature will command in them, also. And all earthly tyrants are but the pigmy reflections of this most mighty and most inexorable mistress of human destinies the world has ever known.

But to return to the American husband. He may use a toothpick when traveling, but no one can excel him in looking after womankind. A German girl I met abroad told me that she could tell the nationality of any man by the way he left a train, even if his back

were to her and his voice silent. The German stalked out and left his wife to follow as best she could. The Englishman was punctilious and bored, the Frenchman was nervous, cross, and garrulous, the Dane sad and solicitous. Only the American was quick, efficient, and happy in the performance of his natural duty. Unless when foreign food gives him dyspepsia, or he is inclined, while following his wife through the shops, to worry about the Custom House, he is, when traveling, as happy as a boy, and flings about money—when he has it—like royalty visiting royalty. With the European, domestic economics are never in abeyance. The nobility travels second-class, and once a housewife always a housewife; but when an American takes his family on a vacation, the best is not enough; economy sleeps, life is one reckless orgie of dollars—until the obsession suddenly descends upon him that unless he takes the next steamer home, new and unthought-of combinations will whistle him down the wind; and return he does forthwith, with his lamenting family in his wake.

This is one type of American; but there is another, and I wonder he is so seldom alluded to in book or newspaper, although he may be met every day at home and abroad. This is the frigid American. He is icy, correct, formal. He raises his eyebrows at a laugh, chills to the marrow the stranger who addresses him, and his face is a mask. Only a republic could have produced him. His course is instigated by the deep, almost despairing self-consciousness of the American of family traditions, which, unless daily manifested in this firm and subtle manner, will be lost sight of in the infinite sea of democracy. In a few generations we will recover from this vice, but the end is not yet. The New Yorker with four generations of unassailable posi-

tion behind him, who can and does look with cutting disdain upon the new fortunes which are crowding into society, can no more help being conscious of his superiority than a sovereign of Europe can avoid the knowledge that he is the Lord's anointed. Oddly enough, he is not as popular abroad as the other sort, who is looked upon as the real thing.

Perhaps the strangest variety of American husband is he who, having by dint of brain, energy, and other superior gifts, made a fortune, tamely retires to the background, and permits his wife and daughters to become active members of fashionable society. He sits at his board week after week, and listens to the chatter of very young men and of the professional diner-out, and from year's end to year's end he does not hear an original remark, a new idea, anything which resembles conversation. He knows many clever men, who read and think and live, but they will not come to his dinner parties, where, indeed, his wife and daughters would rather not have them. A certain sort of man fits society, knows its *nuances*, its slang, its little intimacies, its exactions. He may not be brilliant, but Society is; and needs him to help make it so. The self-made father puzzles over the strange taste of his womankind, their unassuming minds, their seeming delight in doing, saying, and hearing nothing, month in and month out, that is worth while, then, after fruitless remonstrance, he shrugs his shoulders, and reflects that too much should not be expected of women, that they are always children, and that as far as they go there is little fault to be found with them.

The only generalization of American men that I can think of is, that while they have certain inevitable national peculiarities, fundamentally they illustrate the eternal truth that men are men.

YVANTHOÉ FERRARA

(FROM BRETON SOURCES)

By Bliss Carman

TEACH *me, of little worth, O Fame,
The golden word that shall proclaim
Yvanhoé Ferrara's name.*

I would that I might rest me now,
As once I rested long ago,

In the dim purple summer night,
On scented linen cool and white,

Lulled by the murmur of the sea
And thy soft breath, Yvanhoé.

What cared we for the world or time!—
Though like a far off fitful chime,

We heard the mournful anchored bell
Above the sunken reef foretell

That time should pass and pleasure be
No more for us, Yvanhoé.

We saw the crimson sun go down
Across the harbor and the town,

Dyeing the roofs and spars with gold;
But all his magic, ages old,

Was not so wonderful to me
As thy gold hair, Yvanhoé.

Between the window and the road
The tall red poppies burned and glowed;

They moved and flickered like a flame,
As the low sea-wind went and came;

But redder and more warm than they,
Was thy red mouth, Yvanhoé.

YVANTHOÉ FERRARA

I think the stars above the hill
Upon the brink of time stood still;

And the great breath of life that blows
The coal-bright sun, the flame-bright rose,

Entered the room and kindled thee
As in a forge, Yvanhoé—

Prospered the ruddy fire, and fanned
Thy beauty to a rosy brand,

Till all the odorous purple dark
Reeled, and thy soul became a spark

In the great draft of Destiny
Which men call love, Yvanhoé.

The untold ardor of the earth
That knows no sorrow, fear, nor dearth,

Before the pent-up moment passed,
Was glad of all its will at last—

And more, if such a thing could be—
In thy long kiss, Yvanhoé.

For years my life was bright and glad,
Because of the great joy we had;

Until I heard the wind repeat
Thy name behind me in the street,

Like a lost lyric of the sea,
"Yvanhoé, Yvanhoé."

But now the day has no desire;
The scarlet poppies have no fire;

There is no magic in the sun
Nor any thing he shines upon;

Only the muttering of the sea,
Since thou art dead, Yvanhoé.

*Now God on high, be mine the blame,
If time destroy or men defame
Yvanhoé Ferrara's name.*

FIRST LOVE

By J. J. Bell

Author of "Wee Macgregor," "Ethel," Etc.

"MY dear boy, my dear boy!" exclaimed Mrs. France, in a shocked, but kindly voice.

"I—I love her, awfully; I really do, you know," I stammered, feeling that I ought to be pale, but knowing that I was crimson.

"But——" began Mrs. France, and stopped with a smile which she evidently could not repress, and which somehow made me warmer than ever. It was this way. I, Jack Robinson, aged eighteen, first-year medical and potential poet, had just informed Mrs. France that I adored her youngest daughter, Mildred; that I could never adore any one else, and that Mildred had consented to marry me whenever I got a practice of my own. We had long felt, Mildred and I, that we were older than our years, and at a picnic the previous day I had persuaded her, in a mad moment, to let me speak to her mother, whose many kindnesses had inspired me with some confidence in her sympathy.

"Do you think she will be angry?" I had asked Mildred.

"No, Jack; but I'm a little afraid she might be amused. You see, she can't be expected to look at things as we do. And perhaps it would be better if you were to wait for—for a year or—two."

"Mildred!"

"Well, dear—don't be cross—you know we are pretty young to be engaged—in public, I mean."

"But we care for one another awfully, don't we?"

"Of course, Jack! I wouldn't be sitting here with you, and—letting you touch my hair if we didn't."

"Dear! But I want to be really en-

gaged to you, and give you a ring, Mildred," I whispered, instinctively touching my waistcoat pocket wherein reposed my fortune—three sovereigns.

"But I've got a ring, Jack."

"Pooh!—a common, silver affair that I gave you last year. And you daren't be seen with it."

"Only when I'm alone with you, dear. And I like it very much, Jack."

"Sweet little Mildred!"

And so we had babbled on in the shade, while the rest of the party played foolish games in the sun, and at last Mildred, as I have said, had granted me permission to divulge our secret to her mother.

"My dear boy," said Mrs. France, checking her smile after a few seconds which seemed to me like hours, "you have done quite right in telling me this; but you must forgive me when I say that I could not think of such a thing as an engagement—oh, not for years, at least."

I believe I did get a little pale then.

"Why, Jack," continued Mrs. France, "Mildred is only sixteen, and you are barely eighteen."

"Eighteen last week," I murmured. "We can't help being young," I added, miserably and rebelliously.

Mrs. France put her handkerchief to her lips for a moment. Then she asked, gently:

"Have you spoken about this to your parents?"

"No," I answered, feebly, feeling extremely uncomfortable, and growing red once more. I could imagine my father's kindly, but sensible, remarks and my mother's tender advice.

Mrs. France arose from her seat and came to my side. She laid a hand on my shoulder, and suddenly bent down and kissed my hot cheek.

"I think you'd like to get away from me now, wouldn't you?" she said, softly.

Without a word I got up and stumbled to the door. As I left the house I knew Mildred was watching from an upper window, but I could not look back.

The next morning—what a wretched night I spent!—came a letter from Mildred:

"MY POOR, DEAR JACK: I can't tell you how sorry I am. When I saw you going down the garden yesterday afternoon looking so unhappy and sort of broken-down I just threw myself on the bed and cried. It is terrible. We were so happy till yesterday, too. Dear, when you had gone mother came to my room. She wasn't a bit angry. I wish she had been; but she just spoke very gently, and I suppose sensibly, and I hadn't a word to say. But I'm glad she isn't going to tell father. Dear Jack, I wish we had kept our secret; but I don't blame you for, of course, I shouldn't have allowed you to tell. Old people don't seem to understand things. I know a girl who has a cousin who was married at seventeen! She ran away from home. But I couldn't do that, and I know you would not ask me, dear, good Jack. Mother didn't say I wasn't to write to you or meet you again, so we needn't be altogether miserable. I'd go to the wood to-morrow afternoon, but Aunt Jane is coming, so I *must* stay at home, though I know I shall weary terribly. I hope you are feeling better to-day, dear. You can write if you like. I have nothing to do the day after to-morrow. With all my love, yours,
"MILDRED."

I had arranged to play off a golf tie with a fellow that morning, but I let him have a walk-over, and spent the time in replying to Mildred's letter and writing a few verses for her. I blessed her for her sweet epistle, and told her at length of my sufferings. I spoke gently but firmly of the want of understanding in old people; and, while generously forgiving Mrs. France, expressed the hope that she would never regret having kept us apart even temporarily—for, of course, I absolutely refused to accept her recent decision as final. Then I poured out my heart over five pages in loving words and phrases, and in con-

clusion announced that I would be waiting in the wood at half-past two the following afternoon. Having finished writing I began to take a more hopeful view of life; so, after enjoying a somewhat unnecessary shave and a much-needed lunch, I sallied into the village and posted the letter. My confidence had returned to such an extent that I believe I might have called on Mildred that afternoon had I not been aware of her Aunt Jane's visit.

I slept well that night; but in the morning a foreboding seized me when I discovered another letter from Mildred on the breakfast table. After breakfast, or rather after no breakfast, I retired to my room and tore off the envelope. It was far, far worse than I had anticipated.

"MY DEAR, DEAR, DEAR JACK: Little did I think when I wrote yesterday what was hanging over us. I had just finished reading your letter to-night when mother came into my room and told me she had arranged for me to go away with Aunt Jane in the morning to stay with her for two months. Oh, Jack, what a horrible shock it was. I've stopped in the middle of my packing to write this, but I can't believe yet that I'll never see you again till Christmas, for when I come home from Aunt Jane's you will have gone back to college.

"What will you do, my poor Jack? I know it will be dreadful for you, dear, and for myself I don't know what I shall do. And Aunt Jane is so deadly dull to live with. I have put your ring on a bit of blue baby-ribbon and hung it around my neck, and I shall never, never forget you. Perhaps you'll forget. I'm not really so pretty as you say I am, Jack; my hair isn't nearly so fair as it used to be, and I think my cheeks are getting thin, and perhaps the dimples you like will be gone by Christmas, and then you—oh, I won't think about it, Jack. Dear, the letter that came to-night is the nicest you ever wrote, and I'm going to keep it near the ring always, and read it whenever I get frightened you have ceased to care for me. I shall write to you from Aunt Jane's, but you must not write to me, as I'm sure she would make such trouble about it. I expect she knows why I am being sent away with her. Dear Jack, I must stop. They are wanting me downstairs. Good-by, good-by, dearest, and don't forget your unhappy
MILDRED.

"P. S.—I have opened this to say that it was Florrie Dixon who had called when they wanted me downstairs. She is helping me to pack now. She is a sweet pet. She discovered my secret, Jack! I don't know how, but she did. She is fearfully sorry for

us both, and would do anything to help us. She says she knows what it is herself; her boy is away just now. I know you don't like dark girls, Jack; but Florrie is a darling, and you can trust her. Write to me at once, and give the letter to her. She will be in the wood at half-past two to-morrow. Dear Jack, I can't write more; but I feel better to think there's a way of hearing from you. Please send me some more verses. The last were lovely, though they weren't true, were they? Good-by again, dear Jack. M."

I need not describe the sufferings of that forenoon. Suffice it to say that I penned a reply to Mildred which, in a blank envelope, I carried to the wood at the hour appointed.

Florrie Dixon's dusky charms had never in the least degree appealed to me. Indeed, I had always considered her rather a forward girl. She was a year older than Mildred, which was, of course, an age too old; and she had a way of making fellows look foolish at parties and picnics. However, I felt that it was very kind of her to help Mildred and me, and, as I waited her coming in the wood, I cheerfully admitted she could not help having such black hair and eyes.

I took a cigarette from a case Mildred had given me on my birthday and lit it, and ere it was half consumed I caught sight of a bit of bright red moving among the green, which I recognized as a cap much affected by Florrie. Presently she appeared, and I remember how dark she looked in her white garments, and that she wore a little red bow at her throat and a band of the same color around her waist. She made a brilliant figure in the dusky wood.

I went down the narrow path to meet her feeling rather shy.

She held out her hand, smiling.

I took it, and stammered:

"This is awfully good of you, Miss Dixon."

"Isn't it?" she said, with a quiet little laugh. "I suppose I am doing wrong, though," she added, shaking back her hair and frowning slightly.

I didn't know exactly what to say.

"Well," she went on, easily, "have you got anything for the postman, Mr. Robinson?"

Somehow her eyes made me blush as I extracted the unaddressed letter from my pocket and held it out to her.

"Thanks. I'll address it in my own fair hand, and see that it is posted to-night. Poor little Mildred will be glad to get it."

"I hope so," I murmured, humbly.

"She's a sweet girl," said Miss Dixon, softly.

"Y-yes," said I, foolishly.

"By the way, Mr. Robinson, she expects you to write twice a week."

"Is that all?" I exclaimed.

Florrie laughed.

"Think of me, please!"

"I beg your pardon, Miss Dixon."

"Oh, it's all right. But twice a week is pretty often, isn't it? Mildred said Tuesdays and Fridays."

"Very well. But are you sure you don't mind—er—meeting me here on those days?"

"I'm a very obliging person, Mr. Robinson; but if I get tired of this arrangement I'll suggest another. Good-by till Tuesday."

"Good-by—and thank you," I said, shaking hands with her.

She placed my letter inside her blouse, nodded to me and went swiftly along the path toward the highroad. I watched her out of sight, and then flung myself on the dry moss and meditated. I had misjudged Florrie, I was sure. She was a sweet, sympathetic girl, and her eyes were not black at all—they were a beautifully dark blue.

On Monday I received this letter, written by Mildred on Sunday:

"MY DEAR OLD JACK: It was good to get your letter on Saturday; but you really must not be so mumpy and mournful, for the time will soon pass. Aunt Jane has been so kind. She made the journey almost pleasant, and has done all she could to amuse me since we arrived here. She has a very pretty house and she gave me a little garden party yesterday afternoon. It was a perfect day and the boys and girls were all nice. But how I wished you were beside me, dear! I wonder how you get on with Florrie, Jack. She is a sweet girl, and you must give up your prejudice against dark women. . . . Well, dear, will you try to be contented without me? It will be jolly meeting at Christmas, you know. You will write on Tuesday, and

"please make it a cheerful letter, dear boy, if you can. I'll try to write you a longer one next time; but it's time for church now, and I must stop. With lots of love from your
"MILDRED."

I leave out the best bit of the letter, but somehow, taking it altogether, it did not make me so happy as it ought to have done. However, I replied to it with as much cheerfulness as I could muster, and inclosed some verses which I had written in the wood on the Friday afternoon.

Next day I met Florrie, but she was in a great hurry, and merely took my letter with a word of sympathy for my wretched appearance and left me to myself. I found myself wondering if her haste meant that she was going to meet some fellow or other.

Mildred's answer came on Friday morning. It was bright, but rather brief. She expatiated on her aunt's kindness, saying she could hardly get a minute to herself for writing owing to the round of entertainments provided for her special benefit. She casually mentioned "an awfully cheeky boy," with whom she played much croquet, and who had offered to serenade her on his mandolin. "Of course," she wrote, "I gave him a good snub." Which helped to reassure me for an hour or so. Her next letter was a long one, but it dealt principally with the places she had visited and the people she had met. She said little about herself, and omitted to acknowledge my most recent effusion. I began to feel angry with her.

At one of our meetings in the wood, about three weeks after Mildred's departure, Florrie appeared less hurried than usual, and we fell into conversation.

"I met Mildred's mother this afternoon," remarked Miss Dixon, presently.

"Oh!" said I.

"I felt rather guilty, Mr. Robinson." She shook back her hair—a trick of hers—and frowned.

"I'm sorry, Miss Dixon. But after this there will be only one letter a week," I said. "Mildred is afraid her aunt suspects something."

"How horrid!"

"I don't think Mildred minds very much," I muttered, bitterly.

"Oh, you mustn't say that, Mr. Robinson," said my companion, reproachfully. "Mildred isn't a fickle girl."

"She's very young," I observed, more in sorrow than in anger.

Miss Dixon was silent.

A light breeze filtered through the wood; the green flickered, and some leaves, the first victims of autumn, fell lazily around us. One was caught on Florrie's hair. I made a mental note for a sonnet as I awkwardly removed it.

"This leaf was once a happiness," I murmured.

• "How tragic!" said she, shaking back her hair, and smiling right into my eyes.

Something tempted me to say: "I wish another one would fall as—as this one did."

"What a queer wish!"

"You—you have such—such pretty hair, Miss Dixon."

"Nonsense! I'm going to put it up before Christmas. Will you give me the letter now, Mr. Robinson?"

"What a shame! So much of it will be lost when you put it up. I was watching a beam of light on it just now, and—"

"But the letter?"

"Oh, yes. But do you think I should send it when she wants me to write only once a week? Perhaps I should keep it back till Friday?"

"If you wish, I shan't post it till then."

"But, Miss Dixon, if you wouldn't mind coming here again on Friday, I'd keep it till then in case I might wish to add something, or"—I added to myself—"leave out something."

"I see; but I don't know that I can come on Friday, Mr. Robinson."

"Would you rather not come?"

"Oh, I don't mind, if there's nothing else I must do," she returned, carelessly.

There was a pause, and she began to tap her foot on a dead twig as if she were impatient to be gone. I noticed that her eyelashes were the longest I had ever seen.

"Don't look so miserable," she suddenly exclaimed.

"I was looking at you. Do you mind?"

"I don't make you miserable!"

"I'm not quite sure."

"Then I'd better go. Couldn't you address the letter in your own writing for once, Mr. Robinson?"

"Perhaps I could. But won't you come on Friday all the same?" I asked, nervously.

She glanced quickly at me, but said nothing.

"Don't you think we might be friends, Florrie?" I inquired.

"I don't know, Mr. Robinson."

"Call me Jack, please."

"Why?"

"Because—because I want to call you Florrie!"

"Do you? Why?"

Happily I detected a merry glance in her eyes.

"I'll tell you, if—if you're not in a hurry."

"I'm not in any special hurry; but I think I ought to be going, Mr.—Jack."

"Let us sit down here for five minutes, Florrie."

She shook back her hair, and frowned reflectively.

"No!" her lips said, daintily.

"Please, Florrie!"

"No; I'll leave you alone here to your thoughts of——"

"I don't want to be left alone to my thoughts of——"

"Well, you ought to. Good-by," she said, with abrupt severity, and held out her hand.

I took it, and—kept it.

"Let me go! You are very rude, Jack!"

"Stay for five minutes, Florrie!"

"You won't try to keep me longer?"

"No. Let us sit down here."

We seated ourselves on the mossy ground, and at first there was rather a long silence. When Miss Dixon arose to depart two hours later she had promised to come to the wood on the Friday.

Thursday morning brought a letter from Mildred:

"MY DEAR, DEAR JACK: It's horrid to have no letter from you to-day, and Satur-

day seems so far off. I didn't know I cared so much, dear, till the post brought nothing this morning. Please, never mind what I said about writing only once a week, Jack. Write twice, and I'll take the risk. Aunt Jane is as kind as ever, but I'm sick of being entertained and want to be home very badly. I'll do all I can to get home before you go to college, for I don't think I could exist without seeing you till Christmas, dear Jack. Your last verses were perfect, but too sad. Don't ever even fancy me growing tired of you. I've never flirted with any one, and never shall. And I trust you always, dear. . . . I suppose you and Florrie are good friends, and I don't know what we could have done without her. She writes now and then, but she doesn't tell me how you are looking, and neither do you. Be sure to enjoy your holiday, for you will soon be working hard again. I think a doctor's is such a noble life, dear Jack. . . . This is the first time I've had a chance of writing you a decent letter. I feel I've often written you hurried ones that weren't very nice, but I couldn't help that. To-day Aunt Jane has a headache, and I can't help feeling glad. Send me a long, long letter on Friday, and tell me all about yourself and what you are doing. I can't help smiling when I imagine them at home thinking my visit to Aunt Jane is curing me. Dear, nothing can cure me, unless—but that could not happen. Could it, Jack? Good-by, dearest, and be as happy as you can. More than ever your

"MILDRED.

"P. S.—How is our dear old wood looking now? We had a picnic in a wood here the other day, but it was dreadfully stale."

If one can weep without tears, then I'm afraid I wept over Mildred's letter. Dear little girl! Fool that I had been not to trust her! It would be a very short visit to the wood on the morrow, I told myself a hundred times. I began a reply over and over again, but I could not write to her that day.

Then on Friday morning came this note and inclosure:

"I have found that I do not really care for you and I don't suppose you mind. I send back your ring. It may be useful.

"M. F."

The forenoon passed somehow, and at the usual hour I met Miss Dixon in the wood. Her face was pale, and her eyes were full of fear.

"It was Daisy Ramsay," she began, at once. "She must have written to Mildred. She told me she saw us here the other day. Mildred has sent back my last letter without opening it. Little fool! Has she no pride?"

"Be quiet, Florrie! It was all my fault," I cried, in my shame.

"Of course you've heard from Mildred. I hope you don't expect me to send your reply, because——"

"I've no reply to send."

"What?"

"I—I've nothing to say for myself."

"Oh, but surely——"

"Look there, Florrie!"

And I handed her Mildred's last note.

She read it, shaking back her hair and frowning.

"Poor Jack!" she said, softly.

A gust of wind broke through the wood, and a shower of leaves fell around us. One came to rest on her black hair, but I let it lie.

"What are you going to do?" she asked, handing me back the note.

"Nothing."

She regarded me curiously for a moment.

"Then I think I'd better go!" she whispered.

"Good-by, Florrie," I said, eager to be alone.

"Good-by, Jack. You're a queer boy," she returned, with a faint smile.

"Good-by," she repeated, gravely, and walked away.

When it was almost dark I went home.

All this happened ten years ago.

Waiting for patients in my consulting-room this afternoon I took it into my head to tidy up certain drawers in my writing table.

In one of them I found a tarnished silver ring.

Ah, Mildred!



A BRIC-A-BRAC AFFAIR

HE is a soldier, young and gay,
 She is a dainty miss,
 He leans toward her with a smile,
 Her lips invite a kiss.
 The nook is one for lovers planned,
 A place to bill and coo,
 Where sweeping folds of thick brocade,
 And screens shut off the view.

But overhead the china clock—
 Pink porcelain—ticks away
 The minutes into hours, and yet
 The silly twain delay.
 The gallant's arm is empty still,
 And still the maid coquettes,
 Because they are a little pair
 Of Dresden statuettes.

MINNA IRVING.

POURQUOI

BEING THE QUESTION ASKED BY ONE MARCEL LATOUR

By Salome Howland

BUT no! The American woman is the epigram—how do you say it? —the epitaph—the conundrum —ah!—the problem. For the women of other lands, les françaises, les italiennes, les russes—n'importe—without wishing to boast, I must avow que je m'y connais un peu. But the American woman! I do not understand her.

Tenez, I will recount you a little adventure that arrived to me before some months; you shall see for yourself what she is of an enigma. One beautiful day I found myself en route from St. Etienne to Lyon, in a railway wagon, alone with a woman. I knew immediately that she was an American; they have a façon of holding themselves, of carrying the head that makes them to be recognized partout. I regarded her. I had often heard speak of l'Americaine, and I had observed her march on the boulevards, but it was the first opportunity to entertain a conversation with her; and Marcel Latour is not the man to lose an opportunity, quand il s'agit d'une femme. It was also a new species to dissect. I said to myself: "Come; we will see what it is, la fameuse Americaine!"

D'abord; we spoke, of necessity, about the country, the paysage, the weather. Then I essayed to lead the discourse to affairs more personal. She had an air, not precisely bold, but intrepid, audacious, which picked—packed—enfin, qui m'a piqué. She was very pretty; not like les angliches, red and white and gauche; nor like the women of my own land, with their beauté du diable, or their virgin eyes thrown down

in modesty, stealing the side glances of intention; she was of a refreshing novelty. Her flesh was white, but firm—I touched her hand, by an accident carefully planned, in opening the window in her corner. Her eyes were deep and clear as sources, with a fashion of plunging themselves into your own that I found troublante. She had a superb farm—I would say form—supple and slender, though grand—she was as tall as myself. Her lips were red and full, with a faint quiver at the corners—delicious. I felicitated myself that the chance was presented to me.

To open the road to her confidences, I gave her mine. I told her my name—frankly, with a card, as proof of good faith; I told her that I habited Lyon, that I returned at the moment from Marseille, on a voyage of affairs; that I would not arrest myself in the city, but would meet my family at the gare and return to Givors, where the aunt of my wife, who possessed a comfortable property, was sick. In revenge, I found that l'Americaine was to go to Paris; I expressed the desire to accompany her, to demonstrate the city to her. She took evidently pleasure in talking to me, for she smiled very much. I could perceive that she was a woman of intellect; she appreciated my conversation.

I remarked that she carried no ring of marriage, and I demanded of her if she did not have fear to be alone. She responded: "But no! What should I be afraid of?" with a regard that I could not evade to accept as a challenge. I asked her if she felt not the need of a husband to protect her.

"The American woman has not need of a protector," she said.

Then I made questions about America. There were things I desired to apprehend, and one gains so much more from a native than from reading. Par exemple, in regard to the divorces.

"Is it true that in Chicago one can obtain the divorce within a week?"

"Assuredly; one can stop over between trains, and get it in the same time that it takes to lunch."

"And you—do you ride the horses bareback?" I asked. (I had seen Buffalo Bill, and I knew the habitudes in America.)

"Always," she declared, "and we wear blankets, at home."

She regarded me so amicably, with the eyes naïve and innocent as those of a child. I could perceive that I was agreeable to her. Pourtant, I could not always understand her. Myself, I speak the english fluently, as you see; but many words that she employed—and phrases entire—I could not follow. I do not comprehend "Johnny on the spot," or "to chase the frame," or "nit"—a very little word, that I nevertheless cannot find in the dictionary. And "to get busy"—what will that signify? When I seek to make her a compliment, she said "Come off," or "It is a pretty song and dance." I did not dance or sing, and I could not come off of anything save the seat in the wagon. If I had been vis-à-vis, I should have thought she desired me to come over, but I was already beside her. It must have been american—it was not the english that was assigned to me in school.

I say I will soon visit New York—I have not the intention, but with women, one must always lie—and I demand if I may not visit her. She says "But yes." She gave me her address—tenez, la voici : 156 Nonesuch Street.

Nonesuch—one has the curious names in America!

I approach more intimate subjects. I assure her that I find her sympathique; I say I think we would soon become very good friends. She says "You have another think coming." I have the air to understand.

Oh, you understand, I have the reputation among the women. And I make progress with this one; I can see that I impress her, that with the time, I would achieve a success. But it is precisely the time that fails us. We are approaching Lyon; I essay to touch her foot; she is difficult; I cannot find it. In one hour more, without doubt—but we have not one hour more. I regret it sincerely. I would like to continue the entretien, to win her slowly, by degrees, by the steps psychologique. But one must do what one can. We are near to my destination, nothing to say of my family. There is no time to lose. Après tout, does not a woman most admire a man who is hardy, courageous? We enter the city; we collect our baggages; the guard open the doors. She wishes me bonjour. I seize her by the waist; I say "Adieu, mon amour"; I kiss her on her pretty red mouth.

Then, I avow, she surprise me. Figurez vous that she push me away, with vigor, violently. She regard me a moment with eyes of amaze; then she lets herself fall on the seat and begins to cry. Assuredly, I had not believed that of a woman with so much esprit, so much aplomb. A woman who voyages alone, unmarried, who has no fear, who talks to men franchement, regarding them in the eyes, droit, without dropping her lashes, without hesitation—she is not one to be offended by little gallantries. She must know what to attend. And if she is surprised—Dame! I have given her a lesson. A woman should not be without a husband or a chaperone, at that age there. Myself, I would have passed for un niais if I had not found a spirituel dénouement to our agreeable tête-à-tête.

But I cannot bring myself to believe in her emotion. I perceive that her grief is a pose—a ruse. She hope, without doubt, that I would comfort her, and it would all be to commence again. But she forget that I have now other affairs; I have no more time to give her. D'autrement, a woman who cries does not attract me; les larmes leur viennent trop facilement. Neanmoins, I admit that she played her rôle

well; she had not the red nose, but was even more belle than ever, with eyes that flashed like the lightning across the rain, and lips that curved in a façon to entice yet more—a veritable picture of disdain. I had envy to remain; but time pressed me. I essay to take her hand; she snatch it away. The comedy cannot last; it begins to fatigue me. But I act the gentleman; I am always courteous; I bow; I assure her that I will guard the souvenir of a charming afternoon. I take my baggage, I descend, I save myself.

I think the incident makes a bonne histoire to recount to my friends au café. I find even a good title—"Une Americaine Vaincue." I am satisfied with myself. I commence to search for my family. Suddenly, I find myself caught from behind. I return; it is l'Americaine.

She cries no more; her cheeks are red, d'un rouge vif; her eyes are bright. She exclaims "You will not leave me!" She throws herself upon me. "Mon bien-aimé—my beloved! Do not quit me thus!"

I know not what she means. I am dazed, égaré. I regard her with alarm. Has she lost her head? Does she beat the country?

"Mademoiselle," I protest, essaying to disengage myself. She holds me tight. Have I been voyaging with a lunatic? I have shivers at the thought. And she had been so tranquil on the wagon! Or is she épris de moi? Can it be that the little caress, that one might offer to any one, has turned her head? Are the Americaines always like this? I am moved with pity. But the situation is embarrassing.

"Que voulez-vous?" I demand.

"Vous!" she reply.

She is folle! To attack a man before all the world, there, in the center of his own city! I recognize my own danger. I struggle. I seek to liberate myself. In vain. And from the salle d'attente comes my wife, Antoinette, my children—Guillaume, Berthe, le petit Gaston—tous!

I gasp, I clutch for breath. The more I strive, the more she clasp me. She

hold me with the arms of a golf girl. I am helpless.

Antoinette is angry, flushed. Behold me between the two!

"Mais Monsieur, veuillez expliquer—"

Et l'autre—

"Take me with you, Marcel; I will stay with you always!"

And the stupid woman does not see that she is compromising me! She regards me with amorous eyes; elle me tutoye même—et devant ma femme!

"She is imbecile," I cry.

"Cruel! it is not thus that you talk when we are alone," murmurs l'Americaine. What to do? I essay to retain my dignity, but it is a position so ridiculous, that a woman embraces one in public. Quel goût extraordinaire, à choisir ce lieu! And the effort to escape—one is absurd. My friends laugh; my wife is furious; the children point, the mouth open; it is insupportable. Enfin, the guard calls the train to Paris; and voici my tormentor who suddenly abandons me. She says:

"Monsieur, I wish you a better knowledge of les Americaines; and you, madame, a better knowledge of your husband."

But the recriminations to which she left me! I have not yet succeeded to make the affair clear to Antoinette. She rejects all my explanations. I cannot make her believe that I was the innocent victim of a madwoman. Her aunt, who has a comfortable property, threatens to leave it in the hands of another branch of the family. One still laughs at me, also, among my friends.

But the thing that troubles me especially is that I am puzzled. I can comprehend nothing of it—why she encouraged me in the wagon, why she attacked me afterward, and what signified her farewell words?

No; it is too difficult for me; I do not understand the American women; c'est d'autant plus irritant, que je me croyais connoisseur dans ces choses-là. But they are too much for me! I beat my head over the question, mais j'y reviens toujours—pourquoi?

THE RED BILLIARD BALL

By Robert MacAlarney

I AM out of the newspaper game now, so I have the time to think it over calmly, in all its strangeness.

How often since it happened have I said to myself: "The real story of the Hampton Pines mystery will never be told unless I tell it."

And here I am, writing it down without even the inducement of "space," which is the wampum of all Park Row scribblers.

There is no need of going into the ethics of what well-bred and ill-bred persons indiscriminately call "yellow journalism." I went through college with men who are now in the manufacturing line, or practicing law without knowing over much about it, or promoting, or fleecing the "lambs" at the Stock Exchange. And as far as I can see, there isn't anything much more disreputable in gathering news to fill cheap evening extras, than in gathering in other people's money under various phases of false pretense. A reporter is a human being earning a salary—that's all—and as a rule he tries to earn it honestly.

What would you do for the news you must have with your breakfast coffee, if it were not for the reporters, "interfering" if you like, in other people's business? Persons, especially fussy bank presidents and capitalists, who will not be interviewed in their skyscraper eyries, ought to consider this before they turn down the card of a newspaper man.

However, I'm out of the profession now, and it doesn't matter to me really one way or the other. But it was only because I did happen to be a "yellow"

journalist, that I can tell you what you would have given a great deal to have known a twelve month ago—what really happened at Hampton Pines.

It was the bitter fag end of a February day when I got the assignment. I was what they call "emergency man" in newspaper shops—the reporter who waits until every one else has gone and the paper has been put to bed. It is a long wait, with only the green shades on the "make-up" man's copy desk to keep you company, so I was glad enough when Briggs, who was on the "night city," sent for me after I had come in from a meager meal on "ham and, draw one" at a little restaurant with Scripture verses on the wall, a stone-throw down the row.

"Here, Gray," he said, handing me a police headquarter's slip. "I'm short-handed to-night. I want you to run up to Hampton Pines, and find out if the Hon. Stanley Torrington is really missing."

"The evening papers had him found yesterday," I said, remembering the story.

"I know," he replied. "But there's something queer about the thing. Brown, at Mulberry Street, has phoned us that the detective bureau is sending out a general alarm. He's been gone for ten days now, and was seen last in the lobby of the Imperial. Tarrytown's your station."

I turned away to get my overcoat from the pegs by the telephone boxes, recalling what I had read about the disappearance. This was little, so I stopped a moment at the "dead room," and looked over the clippings in the

Torrington envelope. It didn't take me long to find out that the Hon. Stanley was a rather spectacular character. There was a big batch of newspaper cuttings about him.

He was a swell Englishman, and had made a splurge at Newport three seasons before, by going out for the automobile record between Madison Square and the Newport Reading Room, and by playing phenomenal polo when he wasn't doing the heavy devoted to some of the "Four Hundred's" debutantes.

The last clipping was from a weekly society sheet, telling of his marriage to the nineteen-year-old daughter of a New York millionaire, who had made most of his money in Western Transatlantic, when the market was squeezed pretty hard by a Chicago syndicate of "good things."

There was a final paragraph of ingeniously-worded gossip about the hopeless attention paid the girl by a young clubman, a distant relative, even after her engagement to Torrington had been announced. The paragraph went on to say that the clubman had gone South the day of the wedding, pretty well down and out because he had lost her. It was a low-down collection of type, the sort that would cut into the woman concerned if she read it. From what I could make out, the Torringtons had come back from their honeymoon journey on the *Deutschland* three months previous, and had gone to Hampton Pines, the country place of the bride's father.

Our sheet had somehow got hold of a picture of the girl. She was a slim, almost frail creature. The butcher in the art room, who had prepared the picture for reproduction, had smeared it up pretty well with India ink, but even then I could get a very fair idea of what the Hon. Mrs. Stanley Torrington looked like. She had a sort of tropical beauty—almost Spanish. Only I thought her head was a bit too large for the slender neck supporting it, and the heavy masses of dark hair added to this impression.

Well, I tucked the clippings back into the envelope, fastened the throat latch

of my coat, and stepped out into the storm. There was an eight-fifteen local at the Grand Central, and I caught it by a hair. On the train I looked in vain for a fellow-newspaper man bound upon the same errand, and was gratified because of it. Ordinarily, I should have been regretful, for a long drive through sleet and rain is a cheerless thing at best. But I knew if the story panned out, I should score a "beat," which would enhance my value in the eyes of the "desk." So I climbed off the car platform resignedly enough. It was a ramshackle old victoria that I finally secured to drive me to the Pines and back.

"There's no one there, I tell you," the cabby said to me, as I dickered with him over the price. "I drove by the house this afternoon, and a stableman at the Ellis', next door, said Mrs. Torrington was in New York."

But in newspaper work it is always a good rule to push a thing the limit. It saves your job once in a while, and once in a great while it means two days of Park Row glory, temporary possession of the "scoop" crown, and a raise in salary.

So I blew the cabby to a drink across the way from the station—it wasn't the easiest thing in the world, leaving that snug little bar with the gale whistling outside—and crawled into the victoria. He tucked a mud-splashed poncho around my legs, and we plodded off. I think I must have slept some. The lamps on the front of the crazy old wagon shed broken streaks of yellow over the flooded road, and the "oosh" of the horse's hoofs as he pulled them out of the mire, was tiresome to listen to. At all events, we were crunching upon a gravel driveway, and had come to a full stop underneath a pitch-dark *portecochère*, before I realized we had turned off the main road.

It was black as a pocket. I could barely make out the bulk of the house, but I knew the estate must be heavily wooded with the pines from which it got its name, for there was that odd feel of density in the darkness that always means trees. I stumbled up the

steps, and felt my way along the window ledges, until my fingers touched the round button of the electric bell of the storm vestibule. Its noise startled me. Then it was lost in the beat of the sleet. I pulled the door open and found the bell again from inside. There wasn't the hint of a light from behind the wrought-iron portals. As I stood listening—and I know of no more dismal sound than the jangle of an electric bell in a dark and empty house—I heard the quick rasp of wheels. It came across me with a jump that I had feed the cabman in advance. I was out upon the veranda, and sliding toward the *porte-cochère*, but it was slow work, and the rattle of the sleet pellets on the roof muffled my shouting.

The victoria was gone. I got one glint from its lamps through the pines a rod away. It wasn't any use, of course, but I stood stock-still and swore in the teeth of the wind until I was half frozen. Then I went back into the storm vestibule again to think it over. It wasn't pretty.

I pounded upon the door, barking my knuckles against the grill. I knew it was useless, but the very noise I made was satisfying. Then, half mechanically, I grasped the heavy knob handle and rattled at the lock. The catch turned easily at my pressure, and almost unconsciously, I stepped into the hallway of the big house. I stood irresolute and uncertain. My heart beat high in my throat, and I felt my muscles strained and sore as I crouched in the murk of the hall. The air was close, as if the house had been shut for a day or two. It could not have been deserted longer than that, I figured, for at that time of year, a week without fire would have made any house damp and smelly.

For a few minutes I hesitated, listening. Then my first surprise at having the door swing open, gave way to a feeling of relief that I was not outside upon the porch, numbed by the wind which I could hear wrenching at the window fastenings. I smiled in the dark over my first agitation. This couldn't be very dangerous, and with

the thought I gave a hello, which seemed to climb a staircase beyond and go traveling through the empty house, room by room. There was no answer. I had expected none. I felt for my match safe, and struck a light. As the blaze leaped from the wooden stick, I shielded it with my palm and looked. The feeling that I was a housebreaker, legitimate food for blow or bullet, laid hold of me. But it was only for a moment.

A glance in the flicker told me the place was uninhabited. It was not any one thing that made me know it. It was the instinctive knowledge of a thing which comes to one sometimes—say at a dinner where you know things are going to be deadly dull by a quick first glance around the table.

The furniture was in order. I lighted a side bracket in the oak half waincoting. The hall had not been empty even long enough to accumulate dust. It ended in a huge bay window with velour-cushioned seats overlooking, I fancied, the Hudson. To the left was a huge fireplace, with the Torrington crest in brass on the brick hood. Beyond was the drawing-room, flanked by the glass partitions of the conservatory. Opposite the drawing-room and across the wide hall, was the breakfast-room. It ran one-half the width of the house, with leaded diamond panes and other Elizabethan fixings. The place was a palace, and I reflected that the Hon. Stanley must be a pretty *blasé* boy to go off and leave it, to say nothing of a pretty wife in the bargain.

There was a candle in a silver stick on the fireplace shelf. I lighted it, and as I'd learned that it paid to be cautious even when it seemed foolish, I turned out the gas. It's not easy to see the shifting glare of a candle through drawn window curtains. Gas is different. It stays steady, and bores a hole through most anything that isn't out and out opaque. A few years of grubbing around police stations and hospitals, haven't rubbed out my capacity for enjoying good pictures when I'm lucky enough to see them. The walls were full of them. I cut out the water

colors and stuck to the others, and what I saw made me put down the Hon. Stanley's father-in-law as a connoisseur. Over the white columned mantelshelf hung a pastel—the work of a master. It was the woman whose photograph I had seen in the "dead room" of my newspaper—the Hon. Mrs. Stanley. I held up the candle and looked long at it. What impressed me more than anything else was what I had felt when I had first seen the picture. The girl was tired—very tired of it all, and her heavy hair was a burden to her.

It was while I leaned on the mantelself that I heard a scraping on the gravel outdoors. "My driver coming back for me," I thought. But a second later the candle was out and left upon the shelf, and I was tiptoeing to the glass doors of the conservatory. For it might not be my man, and if it were not—well, explaining just then would be awkward.

As I pushed open the glass slides the vestibule door banged loudly, and the handle of the grilled portal rattled as a hand turned it. With its swinging a gust of cold air found its way to my legs, while I stole creeping to the shelter of some potted rhododendrons. The monotonous murmur of the steam pipes hid what little noise I made. And I had not got fairly settled by the rhododendrons before, with my overcoat on, I began to be uncomfortably warm.

I had covered some ugly-looking assignments for the paper—Paterson Anarchist meetings and the like—but I don't think I ever felt more like funking it than just then. The hall door shut. I could hear wheels receding, and with the flare of a match came the sound of two voices, a man's and a woman's. One is perfectly safe from observation if he is on one side of a glass partition and the light is on the other. I learned that once at college, when a glass partition was all that saved me from being expelled. I won't relate the circumstances. They weren't the most creditable in the world. But I was needed on the eleven, and so I stayed—behind the partition. I knew that I was safe here beside the rhododendrons, but

still I clung to the floor, and the quick in-take of my breaths sounded almost like a cough to me. I fancied they must hear it. I made out the woman's voice first.

"I am half frozen, and it was all for nothing," she said. There were some indistinct words from her companion, and by the crackling I knew he was down upon the hearth, lighting the sticks that I had seen piled up in the fireplace.

I could see the leaping flame tongues reflected in the mirror of a bric-a-brac cabinet. It is a weird feeling, to crouch unseen, an unbidden guest in a strange house, with two people talking within touching distance of you, and yet unwitting. After that I could hear the man talking the most. His tones were all in a *crescendo* of pleading, the low words of the woman being lost each time by his deep, interrupting murmur. Only once her voice arose sharply into distinctness.

"Never! Never!" she said. Then for a time there was nothing but the crackling of the sticks.

The steam pipes sizzled and sputtered in the conservatory. With my heavy overcoat and the tense strain upon my nerves, I was almost suffocated. I tore at my throat latch savagely, and slipping off the coat, stuffed it between the green pots. The smell of the cool earth was grateful to me as I bent to stow the garment. So I waited.

Then all of a sudden, the girl—she was only a girl—came into the drawing-room from the hall with a candle. She walked straight to the piano, opened it, and taking the candle out of the companion silver stick to the one I had left on the mantelshelf, she stuck it in one of the brass music rack sconces. She still had her hat on. It was one of those big, black feather things our women society reporters call "picture" hats. Even through the moisture-blurred glass, and in the shifting candle shadows I could see she had been crying. It was the girl of the pastel. I'd have known her anywhere.

She sat down at the piano, and her hands fell upon the keys with a discord.

The sound made me jump like a rabbit in my hiding, and my temple pulses throbbed so persistently that I leaned them against the big pots to cool them. It was all fantastic and poster-lady like—one of those unearthly things that Aubrey Beardsley used to draw. Then she sang things in a translucent little soprano—first a bit of an Irish folk song with a plaintive croon, and then Nevin's setting of some words of Kingsley's.

It's a haunting thing at best—that song—even in a brightly-lighted room full of people with some of them chattering. I've known men to drink too much after hearing it, while they were trying to tell you things about themselves in the smoking-room. Hearing it as I was, it made me creep. The girl's heart was in her singing, and the tears that she couldn't choke back, were in her throat. I tell you it was uncanny. "Waiteth there until the bells bring me," she finished. And with the last note she leaned forward upon the music rest, while her shoulders quivered the way girls do when they are sobbing and trying to fight it down.

I'm naturally soft-hearted about women, and it took all my reason to keep me from plunging out of the conservatory and asking her if there wasn't something I could do. I did crawl closer to the glass, and wonder why the Hon. Stanley didn't come in from tinkering with the fire in the hall. He had come back after doing something shady, I fancied, and they had been having it out.

She hadn't been satisfied with his explanation—very young wives never will learn that it is better to be satisfied with them—and he was sulking it while she was being unhappy at the piano. He came in while I was thinking about it—and he *wasn't* the Hon. Stanley Torrington at all. Not that I'd seen the Hon. Stanley before, and could have recognized him. But there was something in this man's face that let me know at once he wasn't the husband. There wasn't the trace of anger or even impatience in it—only agony. He was a clean-looking chap, a thoroughbred;

you could tell that. From the way he was set up I should fancy he had played football on his 'Varsity.

You could see that he didn't know exactly what to do. He went up to the piano, and bent over the sobbing girl. Then he straightened up and walked to the mantelshelf, where the pastel girl was looking down upon both of them, with the same unhappy half smile and the masses of hair that were too heavy for her slender neck. It was very much like the society plays they put on at the Empire, only I should have preferred watching it from an orchestra chair.

After a while she sat up. The music rest had pushed the hat far back upon her head, and she pulled out the long pins and tossed the plumed thing upon the piano. With a pitifully small handkerchief she made dabs at her eyes. She was quite calm now. The man seemed to be trying to catch her glance, but her eyes never met his fairly. Then he spoke.

"We shouldn't have come," he said. "I told you it would be useless."

"Oh, we've had that out," said the girl.

"And even dangerous," the man went on.

The girl shivered.

"I'm cold," she said. The young fellow turned on his heel, and went out into the hall. When he came back he had a carriage cloak in his arms. He wrapped it about the girl, who looked up into his eyes. Her lips moved, and then twitched ineffectually. Then she said very distinctly:

"Dick, I wish he would never come back." When the young fellow said nothing, she began to cry again.

A man is always clumsy when a woman is crying. He touched her on the shoulder as he might have done another man.

"Don't do that," he said. "Don't do that."

"I couldn't stand it," I heard her say. "And after the letter he sent."

"We shouldn't have come," the young fellow repeated. "Anyway, the letter said 'alone.'"

The girl turned on him fiercely. When she arose from the piano she looked very tall.

"Go now, then," she exclaimed. "The servants were telegraphed for. They'll be here on the nine-fifty."

She stood facing him. In the silence the whine of the wind crept into the room along with the beat of the heavy sleet upon the veranda. Then she tottered to him, and he had to catch her or she would have fallen.

"No, no, Dick. Not in the storm," she sobbed.

I've never seen a mental struggle painted more plainly on a man's face than upon that of the man I was watching. He was a thoroughbred, though. You can always tell the well-strung ones. Pedigree is all right enough in a horse when gameness is needed, but it's a poor sort of thing compared to the bones of a man's ancestors stirring within him when honor is in the balance.

So all he did was to steady the girl, set her gently upon her feet, and look away from her face.

"I'll wait until they come," he said. "I didn't believe he would be here. The letter was a lie. He was a beast to drag you out into the storm. We shouldn't have come."

It was the girl who had got into her stride now.

"He is my husband," she answered, faltering just the least bit over the last word. "I could do nothing else but come." She picked up her hat from the piano, and walked to the hall with her little chin up. "Let's go to the billiard-room," she said. "I'll make you tea. It's chilly down here."

I listened to their footsteps upon the staircase—one of those hardwood affairs that made even the girl's small shoes sound clattery. They were gone sure enough, and it was up to me to be going. I was cramped and stiff from my conservatory crouching, and the storm outside sounded dismally as I pulled on my overcoat and stole into the drawing-room. Gad, how it did blow! My teeth chattered at the thought of trying to walk back to the

station. And then, to tell the truth, I was interested enough in things to hate leaving. We newspaper reporters are always looking for what we call "local color." No one knows exactly what it is. That is, one can't very well define it. But when you fall over a story that's got it, you don't have to be told twice that it's there. There were whole tubes of "local color" in this thing. And I had my paper to think of. If I could land the thing it would be the making of me, I reflected.

There was just one thing left for me to do. I couldn't stay in the house, but I could get in again by slipping outside and ringing the bell. Then, after I'd seen the man, who of course would open the door, and had explained to him what I had come to find out, there might be something doing. At least, he might offer to have me driven to the station, when the carriage with the servants from the nine-fifty train got to the house.

I didn't dare to blow out the candle in the piano sconce. But then I figured out that they'd be busy with the tea, and I had to chance it. I paused for just a moment to look again at the pastel over the mantelshef—there was a sort of fascination about the thing—and as I made to go toward the door I had a chill that didn't come from the sound of the hurricane among the pines. There was a man on the breakfast-room threshold staring at me. He wasn't the young fellow I had seen. Instead, while my backbone seemed to stiffen and then suddenly relax into disconcerting curves, I didn't have to do much thinking to understand that he was the Hon. Stanley with his foot upon his native heath. He was the typical Englishman, about ten pounds too beefy to be well conditioned. I never did like the looks of an out and out Britisher, and the Hon. Stanley's face at that moment wasn't the sort to make me change my opinion.

He stared at me, and—there wasn't anything else to do at the moment—I stared at him. I don't believe either of us enjoyed it. Then he took a step toward me.

"Who—who the devil are you?" he asked. "Where's the other one?"

The Hon. Stanley had been drinking. His breath reeked with whiskey even at five paces. And I noticed what I had not noticed before, that there was something steely and bright clutched in his right hand. I know when it is asinine to be cocky. So I pointed upstairs. My brain rocked as I tried to think how I could warn the two above that we were there. But there wasn't any way. Besides, he didn't give me time.

"Take off your shoes," he said. As he stepped noiselessly farther into the hall I saw that he was in his stocking feet. The steely thing pointed and my shoes were off, too. Then he seemed to forget me. Like a cat he sprang to the staircase, and slipped up without a sound.

That was my time for slipping out, but I felt like a cur already, and to have gone then would have made me despise myself. There was the girl to think of. They had lighted a yellow shaded lamp at the landing, and the Englishman turned swiftly to the left toward a half-opened door.

From within came the click of ivory at long intervals, as if some one were making practice shots. Then in the pause came the girl's voice.

"I've got to say it, Dick," it said. "The whole world will know it sometime."

She seemed to be waiting for an answer, but there was only another click with a rebound echo.

"Never really happy," went the voice, like a thin, weakened wire. "Never really happy once."

The Englishman bent from his listening. He turned to me, and grasped my shoulder.

"Curse you," he whispered. "You've been eavesdropping. Go in first, then." His heavy hand shoved me against the unlatched door, and I stumbled into the room, clutching at the polished jambs to keep from falling.

People never act the way you think they're going to when they are surprised. I had the scene photographed on my brain the same as if it had been

a kodak film, and in about as quick time. While I was still staggering from the push the Englishman had given me, and he had taken a step or two after me into the billiard-room, I saw it.

The good-looking young fellow had been making a shot when the door opened. He half bent from calculating the angle, sent one quick glance from me to the Hon. Stanley, and then, with as steady a hand as if he had been playing tournament, he finished. It wasn't a nervous, jerky shot, to hide bad rattles. The balls kissed gently and hung into position for another try. If he had cared to go on, he might have run out ten or eleven. But of course he didn't, since there was an angry husband to reckon with. As for the girl, she didn't even start in her chair when she saw him. She'd been at a teakwood tabouret, busy with the tea things apparently. I don't think she saw me. But she gazed at the Hon. Stanley. She simply looked more weary and tired of it all as she regarded him.

"So you've come, after all," she said, after a while. I was quite out of it, and being there in my stocking feet made me feel awkward and uncomfortable.

The Hon. Stanley didn't reply to his wife. The whiskey he had been drinking must have made him stupid. So the other man walked to where he stood, fiddling with the revolver and looking very foolish.

"You need a drink, Stanley," he said. "You've been out in the wet." He said it soothingly, as one might have spoken to a tired child. The revolver dropped upon a fur rug, where the girl was sitting. She picked it up slowly, and laid it upon the tabouret, while it glittered among the Royal Worcester in the light of the alcohol lamp. The two men were walking slowly to the leather "gallery" couch at the far end of the room. Their backs were turned, and the younger one was talking in a low tone.

The girl leaned toward me eagerly.

"We didn't expect you so soon," she said. "He wrote he was coming. And he seems very ugly to-night. He is always ugly when he's been without the morphine. How did he get away?"

Her questions came so naturally and so quickly that I was more dazed than ever.

"Get away?" I echoed.

"Yes—from the sanitarium. He was to have been watched." It flashed over me in a second why the Hon. Stanley's eyes rolled so much, and why, too, the girl, his bride of less than a year, looked worn to death. "You must understand," she said. "We are afraid of him. You mustn't let him come away again. Be gentle, but you mustn't let him come. Do you understand?"

I nodded. I hadn't the presence of mind to do anything else. So this was the skeleton in the Torrington closet. And she took me for a nurse come after my own. I looked over toward the couch. The Hon. Stanley was joggling his head up and down in a perfectly silly fashion, and mumbling to himself. He seemed stupid enough, Heaven knows, but in his eyes that rolled around searching the room as he muttered, there was an evil light. The other left him and stepped quickly over to the girl at the tabouret.

"Go now," he said, in a whisper.

"No," she said. "It isn't safe for you alone. He'll be asleep presently, and then—may I stay, nurse?"

She turned to me expectantly. And in that moment, as the eyes of the man at her side met mine, I knew that he was not deceived as she was. He knew that somehow and for some purpose, I was masquerading in the Torrington house. But he made no sign.

"The nurse thinks you should go," he said, taking her arm and leading her gently toward the threshold.

"No, Dick," she murmured. But she moved slowly forward. I watched them, pitying her from the bottom of my soul. At the door she hesitated. He was urging her softly on, when her head bent for an instant again into the room. Her gaze slipped by me, and then froze into terror so plainly awful that my heart stopped beating. And as I turned I understood. The Hon. Stanley was standing at the tabouret with the revolver in his hand, grinning joyously.

The other, by the girl, did not understand, for he did not see. But when she made a little wrenching motion of the arm, slipping in front of him as if to protect him, he turned also and saw what I had seen.

"Pretty shooting," babbled the Hon. Stanley. "Dead pigeon or dead wife. Pretty shooting. Dead pigeon."

His eye pupils were shrunken to pin points, and he looked like a clothing-store dummy come to life, but a deadly dummy for all of that.

There wasn't anything to throw at him, and so there wasn't anything for me to do but look on. I couldn't have turned away for the world. It occurred to me that I had never really seen a murder committed before. And I wondered if after shooting the other, the Hon. Stanley would shoot his wife first—or me. The girl's arms were thrown out upon either side of her, screening the young fellow. Meanwhile the revolver barrel wagged up into aiming. At thirty paces it would have been even betting the Hon. Stanley would miss, but this was only fifteen at the outside.

It was done very quickly. As the revolver lifted, the man behind the girl gathered himself for a spring. He leaped toward the green table, while her scream rang through the room. And a billiard ball, with all the deadliness of ivory impact, felled the Hon. Stanley to the fur rug, while his finger pressed the trigger, the report cracking loud enough to drown the scream for the moment. Then, in the silence that followed, there was the crackle of wheels on the driveway outside, with feet upon the veranda and a door's closing.

The girl crept between us and kneeled down by the Hon. Stanley, whose face was working. She touched his forehead, and then picked up the billiard ball that had rolled a foot away. With it, she turned to the young fellow at the table.

"Red," she whispered. When the brain is wrenched too far, reason totters quickly. It was the red ball.

The man looked over at me.

"My shoes are downstairs," I said. He touched a bell in the wall. We waited for the footsteps upon the staircase together. God, what a thoroughbred he was! With the rap, the impassive face of an English servant appeared in the doorway. He was not in livery, and his damp clothing showed me that he had driven through the storm. I remembered, then, that the nine-fifty train must be in.

"Lethbridge," said the young fellow. "Mr. Torrington has returned unexpectedly. He has met with an accident. You will drive for a doctor."

"Yes, sir," said the butler. His eyes told nothing, although the revolver that lay by the Hon. Stanley was in plain sight. He turned to go.

"And Lethbridge," the young fellow added, "you will drive Nurse ———" He looked at me inquiringly. "Reynolds," I answered, at random, seeing that he expected an answer. He bent his head gravely. "You will drive Nurse Reynolds to the station to catch the ten-twenty. He is to fetch a surgeon from the hospital." He looked at me meaningly again. "You are sure it is a fracture?" he asked. I should have been a cad to have stumbled then.

"I am afraid so," I answered. "He struck the edge of the table when he slipped and fell." For me it was well done, and he thanked me with his eyes.

The butler had gone, and we were alone. The girl did not count. She was still upon the floor playing with the red billiard ball. He strode to the revolver, and picked it up.

"Throw it overboard when you cross the ferry," he said. I nodded. I wanted to say something, but I didn't know how. He looked at the girl upon the floor.

"She is my cousin, Heaven pity her," he added. Then he turned to me. "Good-by," he said.

"Good-by," I echoed, a bit thickly, and we struck hands.

That was quite all. I have never seen Hampton Pines again, nor do I care to see it another time. The newspapers

made a great deal of copy out of the thing a few days afterward. You will recall reading about it. For the Hon. Stanley Torrington died without regaining consciousness, and my paper was "beaten" on the news. Incidentally, I lost my position on its staff. The "Hampton Pines Mystery" filled columns for one whole week. Naturally I followed what was written about it. The butler, Lethbridge, went upon the stand at the inquest, and swore that the Hon. Stanley had been felled to the floor by a burglar.

I read Lethbridge's testimony at the breakfast table one morning before I set out to walk Park Row looking for a job. The butler had sworn:

"The man fired one shot at Mr. Torrington. That is the bullet found in the billiard-room wall. Then, with the butt of the pistol, he struck him to the ground. My cries alarmed Mr. Sturtevant."

Q. (By the coroner): "Where was Mr. Sturtevant when the shot was fired?"

A. "Downstairs in the drawing-room. I was serving tea in the billiard-room to Mr. and Mrs. Torrington."

I had rather fancied Lethbridge might be the right sort, for he had driven me to the station that night without a single question. His testimony had been corroborated by Mrs. Torrington.

The papers were full of sketches of her, in deep mourning. In her eyes the artists had put that ever-present tired look, and they, too, had caught the effect of the masses of hair that seemed all too heavy for the slender neck supporting it. But as I looked at them I forgot the sketched-in strokes. I saw instead a girl upon the floor, playing with a red billiard ball.

And so the skeleton in the Torrington family closet clattered its bones to itself. For, of course, the place wasn't really Hampton Pines, and the name wasn't really "Torrington." I have deferred that much to the girl and to the man I have called "Sturtevant."

VENEZIA

(AFTER ALFRED DE MUSSET)

By Thomas Walsh

THROUGH Venice twilight's roses
 No sail its track discloses,
 No fisher dots the bay;
 No lantern's ray.
 The moon from sunset quailing
 Would draw half unavailing,
 Before her forehead proud,
 A silver cloud.

And all is still save only
 The sentries' pacing lonely
 Along the rampart's head
 With measured tread.
 Already fair ones yearning
 For moonlight's clear returning,
 Attend their cavaliers
 With anxious ears.

Vanina, with her tresses
 Outspread for wind's caresses,
 Upon her pillows high
 Floats singing by.
 While, ere Narcisse steals after
 To join the songs and laughter,
 He at his mirror tries
 His mask's disguise.

Let the old horologes
 On palaces of doges
 Rehearse the dreary course
 Of their remorse:
 Out on her pearléd water
 Fond Adriatic's daughter
 Remembers not dead years
 Nor hearts nor tears.

Such loveliness hath crowned her,
 The very chains around her
 Seem necklaces that float
 On beauty's throat.

THE LONESOME ROAD

By O. Henry

Author of "The Roads of Destiny," "Art and the Broncho," Etc.

BROWN as a coffee berry, rugged, pistoled, spurred, wary, indefeasible, I saw my old friend, Deputy-marshal Buck Caperton, stumble, with jingling rowels, into a chair in the marshal's outer office.

And because the courthouse was almost deserted at that hour, and because Buck would sometimes relate to me things that were out of print, I followed him in and tricked him into talk through knowledge of a weakness he had. For cigarettes rolled with sweet corn husk were as honey to Buck's palate; and though he could finger the trigger of a forty-five with skill and suddenness, he never could learn to roll a cigarette.

It was through no fault of mine (for I rolled the cigarettes tight and smooth), but the upshot of some whim of his own, that instead of to an Odyssey of the chaparral, I listened to—a dissertation upon matrimony! This from Buck Caperton! But I maintain that the cigarettes were impeccable; and crave absolution for myself.

"We just brought in Jim and Bud Granberry," said Buck. "Train robbing, you know. Held up the Aransas Pass last month. We caught 'em in the Twenty Mile pear flat, south of the Nueces."

"Have much trouble corraling them?" I asked, for here was the meat that my hunger for epics craved.

"Some," said Buck; and then, during a little pause, his thoughts stampeded off the trail. "It's kind of queer about women," he went on; "and the place they're supposed to occupy in botany. If I was asked to classify them I'd say

they was a human loco weed. Ever see a bronc that had been chewing loco? Ride him up to a puddle of water two feet wide, and he'll give a snort and fall back on you. It looks as big as the Mississippi River to him. Next trip he'd walk into a canyon a thousand feet deep thinking it was a prairie dog hole. Same way with a married man.

"I was thinking of Perry Rountree, that used to be my sidekicker before he committed matrimony. In them days me and Perry hated indisturbances of any kind. We roamed around considerable, stirring up the echoes and making 'em attend to business. Why, when me and Perry wanted to have some fun in a town it was a picnic for the census takers. They just counted the marshal's posse that it took to subdue us, and there was your population. But then there came along this Mariana Goodnight girl and looked at Perry sideways, and he was all bridle-wise and saddle-broke before you could skin a yearling.

"I wasn't even asked to the wedding. I reckon the bride had my pedigree and the front elevation of my habits all mapped out, and she decided that Perry would trot better in double harness without any unconverted mustang like Buck Caperton whickering around on the matrimonial range. So it was six months before I saw Perry again.

"One day I was passing on the edge of town, and I see something like a man in a little yard by a little house with a sprinkling pot squirting water on a rose bush. Seemed to me I'd seen something like it before, and I stopped at the gate, trying to figure out its

brands. 'Twas not Perry Rountree, but 'twas the kind of a curdled jellyfish matrimony had made out of him.

"Homicide was what that Mariana had perpetrated. He was looking well enough, but he had on a white collar and shoes, and you could tell in a minute that he'd speak polite and pay taxes and stick his little finger out while drinking, just like a sheep man or a citizen. Great skyrockets! but I hated to see Perry all corrupted and Willie-ized like that.

"He came out to the gate, and shook hands; and I says, with scorn, and speaking like a parquet with the pip: 'Beg pardon—Mr. Rountree, I believe. Seems to me I sagatiated in your associations once, if I am not mistaken.'

"'Oh, go to the devil, Buck,' says Perry, polite, as I was afraid he'd be.

"'Well, then,' says I, 'you poor, contaminated adjunct of a sprinkling pot and degraded household pet, what did you go and do it for? Look at you, all decent and unriotous, and only fit to sit on juries and mend the woodhouse door. You was a man once. I have hostility for all such acts. Why don't you go in the house and count the tidies or set the clock, and not stand out here in the atmosphere? A jack rabbit might come along and bite you.'

"'Now Buck,' says Perry, speaking mild, and some sorrowful, 'you don't understand. A married man has got to be different. He feels different from a tough old cloudburst like you. It's sinful to waste time pulling up towns just to look at their roots, and playing faro and looking upon red liquor, and such restless policies as them.'

"'There was a time,' I says, and I expect I sighed when I mentioned it, 'when a certain domesticated little Mary's lamb I could name was some instructed himself in the line of pernicious sprightliness. I never expected, Perry, to see you reduced down from a full-grown pestilence to such a frivolous fraction of a man. Why,' says I, 'you've got a necktie on; and you speak a senseless kind of indoor drivel that reminds me of a storekeeper or a lady. You look to me like you might tote an

umbrella and wear suspenders, and go home of nights.'

"'The little woman,' says Perry, 'has made some improvements, I believe. You can't understand, Buck. I haven't been away from the house at night since we was married.'

"'We talked on a while, me and Perry, and, as sure as I live, that man interrupted me in the middle of my talk to tell me about six tomato plants he had growing in his garden. Shoved his agricultural degradation right up under my nose while I was telling him about the fun we had tarring and feathering that faro dealer at California Pete's layout! But by and by Perry shows a flicker of sense.

"'Buck,' says he, 'I'll have to admit that it is a little dull at times. Not that I'm not perfectly happy with the little woman, but a man seems to require some excitement now and then. Now, I'll tell you: Mariana's gone visiting this afternoon, and she won't be home till seven o'clock. That's the limit for both of us—seven o'clock. Neither of us ever stays out a minute after that time unless we are together. Now, I'm glad you came along, Buck,' says Perry, 'for I'm feeling just like having one more rip-roaring razoo with you for the sake of old times. What you say to us putting in the afternoon having fun—I'd like it fine,' says Perry.

"I slapped that old captive range rider half across his little garden.

"'Get your hat, you old dried-up alligator,' I shouts—'you ain't dead yet. You're part human, anyhow, if you did get all bogged up in matrimony. We'll take this town to pieces and see what makes it tick. We'll make all kinds of profligate demands upon the science of cork pulling. You'll grow horns yet, old muley cow,' says I, punching Perry in the ribs, 'if you trot around on the trail of vice with your Uncle Buck.'

"'I'll have to be home by seven, you know,' says Perry again.

"'Oh, yes,' says I, winking to myself, for I knew the kind of seven o'clocks Perry Rountree got back by after he once got to passing repartee with the bartenders.

"We goes down to the Gray Mule saloon—that old 'dobe building by the depot.

"Give it a name," says I, as soon as we got one hoof on the footrest.

"Sarsaparilla," says Perry.

"You could have knocked me down with a lemon peeling.

"Insult me as much as you want to," I says to Perry, "but don't startle the bartender. He may have heart disease. Come on, now; your tongue got twisted. The tall glasses," I orders, "and the bottle in the left-hand corner of the ice chest."

"Sarsaparilla," repeats Perry, and then his eyes get animated, and I see he's got some great scheme in his mind he wants to emit.

"Buck," he says, all interested, "I'll tell you what! I want to make this a red-letter day. I've been keeping close at home, and I want to turn myself a-loose. We'll have the highest old time you ever saw. We'll go in the back room here and play checkers till half-past six."

"I leaned against the bar, and I says to Gotch-eared Mike, who was on watch:

"For God's sake don't mention this. You know what Perry used to be. He's had the fever, and the doctor says we must humor him."

"Give us the checkerboard and the men, Mike," says Perry. "Come on, Buck, I'm just wild to have some excitement."

"I went in the back room with Perry. Before we closed the door, I says to Mike:

"Don't ever let it straggle out from under your hat that you seen Buck Caperton fraternal with sarsaparilla or *persona grata* with a checkerboard, or I'll make a swallow-fork in your other ear."

"I locked the door and me and Perry played checkers. To see that poor, old, humiliated piece of household bric-a-brac sitting there and sniggering out loud whenever he jumped a man, and all obnoxious with animation when he got into my king row would have made a sheep dog sick with mortification.

Him that was once satisfied only when he was pegging six boards at keno or giving the faro dealers nervous prostration—to see him pushing them checkers about like Sally Louisa at a school children's party—why, I was all smothered up with mortification.

"And I sits there playing the black men, all sweating for fear somebody I knew would find it out. And I thinks to myself some about this marrying business, and how it seems to be the same kind of a game as that Mrs. Delilah played. She give her old man a hair cut, and everybody knows what a man's head looks like after a woman cuts his hair. And then when the Pharisees came around to guy him he was so shamed he went to work and kicked the whole house down on top of the whole outfit. 'Them married men,' thinks I, 'lose all their spirit and instinct for riot and foolishness. They won't drink, they won't buck the tiger, they won't even fight. What do they want to go and stay married for?' I asks myself.

"But Perry seems to be having hilarity in considerable quantities.

"Buck, old hoss," says he, "isn't this just the hell-roaringest time we ever had in our lives? I don't know when I've been stirred up so. You see, I've been sticking pretty close to home since I married, and I haven't been on a spree in a long time."

"Spree!"—yes, that's what he called it. Playing checkers in the back room of the Gray Mule! I suppose it did seem to him a little more immoral and nearer to a prolonged debauch than standing over six tomato plants with a sprinkling pot.

"Every little bit Perry looks at his watch and says:

"I got to be home, you know, Buck, at seven."

"All right," I'd say. "Romp along and move. This here excitement's killing me. If I don't reform some, and loosen up the strain of this checkered dissipation I won't have a nerve left."

"It might have been half-past six when commotions began to go on outside in the street. We heard a yelling

and a six-shooter, and a lot of galloping and maneuvers.

"What's that?" I wonders.

"Oh, some nonsense outside," says Perry. "It's your move. We just got time to play this game."

"I'll just take a peep through the window," says I, "and see. You can't expect a mere mortal to stand the excitement of having a king jumped and listen to an unidentified conflict going on at the same time."

"The Gray Mule saloon was one of them old Spanish 'dobe buildings, and the back room only had two little windows a foot wide, with iron bars in 'em. I looked out one, and I see the cause of the rucus."

"There was the Trimble gang—ten of 'em—the worst outfit of desperadoes and horse thieves in Texas, coming up the street shooting right and left. They was coming right straight for the Gray Mule. Then they got past the range of my sight, but we heard 'em ride up to the front door, and then they socked the place full of lead. We heard the big looking-glass behind the bar knocked all to pieces and the bottles crashing. We could see Gotch-eared Mike in his apron running across the plaza like a coyote, with the bullets puffing up the dust all around him. Then the gang went to work in the saloon, drinking what they wanted and smashing what they didn't."

"Me and Perry both knew that gang, and they knew us. The year before Perry married, him and me was in the same ranger company—and we fought that outfit down on the San Miguel, and brought back Ben Trimble and two others for murder."

"We can't get out," says I. "We'll have to stay in here till they leave."

Perry looked at his watch.

"Twenty-five to seven," says he. "We can finish that game. I got two men on you. It's your move, Buck. I got to be home at seven, you know."

"We sat down and went on playing. The Trimble gang had a roughhouse for sure. They were getting good and drunk. They'd drink a while and holler a while, and then they'd shoot up a few bottles and glasses. Two or three

times they came and tried to open our door. Then there was some more shooting outside, and I looked out the window again. Ham Gossett, the town marshal, had a posse in the houses and stores across the street, and was trying to bag a Trimble or two through the windows."

"I lost that game of checkers. I'm free in saying that I lost three kings that I might have saved if I had been corraled in a more peaceful pasture. But that driveling married man sat there and cackled when he won a piece like an unintelligent hen picking up a grain of corn."

"When the game was over Perry gets up and looks at his watch."

"I've had a glorious time, Buck," says he, "but I'll have to be going now. It's a quarter to seven, and I got to be home by seven, you know."

"I thought he was joking."

"They'll clear out or be dead drunk in half an hour or an hour," says I. "You ain't that tired of being married that you want to commit any more sudden suicide, are you?" says I, giving him the laugh."

"One time," says Perry, "I was half an hour late getting home. I met Mariana on the street looking for me. If you could have seen her, Buck—but you don't understand. She knows what a wild kind of a snoozer I've been, and she's afraid something will happen. I'll never be late getting home again. I'll say good-by to you, now, Buck."

"I got between him and the door."

"Married man," says I, "I know you was christened a fool the minute the preacher tangled you up, but don't you never sometimes think one little think on a human basis? There's ten of that gang out in there, and they're pizen with whiskey and desire for murder. They'll drink you up like a bottle of booze before you get halfway to the door. Be intelligent, now, and use at least wild-hog sense. Sit down and wait till we have some chance to get out without being carried in baskets."

"I got to be home by seven, Buck," repeats this henpecked thing of little wisdom, like an unthinking poll parrot.

'Mariana,' says he, 'I'll be looking out for me.' And he reaches down and pulls a leg out of the checker table. 'I'll go through this Trimble outfit,' says he, 'like a cottontail through a brush corral. I'm not pestered any more with a desire to engage in rucuses, but I got to be home by seven. You lock the door after me, Buck. And don't you forget—I won three out of them five games. I'd play longer, but Mariana—'

"Hush up, you old locoed road runner," I interrupts. 'Did you ever notice your Uncle Buck locking doors against trouble? I'm not married,' says I, 'but I'm as big a d—n fool as any Mormon. One from four leaves three,' says I, and I gathers out another leg of the table. 'We'll get home by seven,' says I, 'whether it's the heavenly one or the other. May I see you home?' says I, 'you sarsaparilla drinking, checker playing glutton for death and destruction.'

"We opened the door easy, and then stampeded for the front. Part of the gang was lined up at the bar; part of 'em was passing over the drinks, and two or three was peeping out the door and window taking shots at the marshal's crowd. The room was so full of smoke we got halfway to the front door before they noticed us. Then I heard Berry Trimble's voice somewhere yell out:

"How'd that Buck Caperton get in here?" and he skinned the side of my neck with a bullet. I reckon he felt bad over that miss, for Berry's the best shot south of the Southern Pacific Railroad. But the smoke in the saloon was some too thick for good shooting.

"Me and Perry smashed over two of the gang with our table legs, which didn't miss like the guns did, and as we run out the door I grabbed a Winchester from a fellow who was watching the outside, and I turned and regulated the account of Mr. Berry.

"Me and Perry got out and around the corner all right. I never much expected to get out, but I wasn't going to be intimidated by that married man. According to Perry's idea, checkers was the event of the day, but if I am any judge of gentle recreations that little

table leg parade through the Gray Mule saloon deserved the head lines in the bill of particulars.

"Walk fast," says Perry, 'it's two minutes to seven, and I got to be home by—'

"Oh, shut up," says I. 'I had an appointment as chief performer at an inquest at seven, and I'm not kicking about not keeping it.'

"We had to pass by Perry's little house. His Mariana was standing at the gate. We got there at five minutes past seven. She had on a blue wrapper, and her hair was pulled back smooth like little girls do when they want to look grown-folksy. She didn't see us till we got close, for she was gazing up the other way. Then she backed around, and saw Perry, and a kind of a look scooted around over her face—danged if I can describe it. I heard her breathe long, just like a cow when you turn her calf in the lot, and she says: 'You're late, Perry.'

"Five minutes," says Perry, cheerful. 'Me and old Buck was having a game of checkers.'

"Perry introduces me to Mariana, and they ask me to come in. No sir-ee. I'd had enough truck with married folks for that day. I says I'll be going along, and that I've spent a very pleasant afternoon with my old partner—'especially,' says I, just to jostle Perry, 'during that game when the table legs came all loose.' But I'd promised him not to let her know anything.

"I've been worrying over that business ever since it happened," continued Buck. "There's one thing about it that's got me all twisted up, and I can't figure it out."

"What was that?" I asked, as I rolled and handed Buck the last cigarette.

"Why, I'll tell you. When I saw the look that little woman give Perry when she turned round and saw him coming back to the ranch safe—why was it I got the idea all in a minute that that look of hers was worth more than the whole caboodle of us—sarsaparilla, checkers and all, and that the d—n fool in the game wasn't named Perry Rountree at all?"

DICK, TOM AND HARRY

By E. Nesbit

Author of "The Lie Absolute," "Force of Habit," "The Red House," Etc.

"AND so I look in to see her whenever I can spare half an hour. I fancy it cheers her up a bit to have some one to talk to about Edinburgh—and all that.

"You say you're going to tell her about its having been my doing, your getting that berth. Now I won't have it. You promised you wouldn't. I hate jaw, as you know, and I don't want to have her gassing about gratitude, and all that rot. I don't like it even from you. So stow all that piffle. You'd do as much for me, any day. I suppose Edinburgh is a bit dull, but you've got all the higher emotions of our fallen nature to cheer you up. Essex Court is dull, if you like! It's three years since I had the place to myself, and I tell you it's pretty poor sport. I don't seem to care about duchesses or the gilded halls nowadays. Getting old, I suppose.

"Really, my sole recreation is going to see another man's girl, and letting her prattle prettily about him. Lord, what fools these mortals be! Sorry I couldn't answer your letter before. I suppose you'll be running up for Christmas. So long! I'm taking her down those Ruskins she wanted. Here's luck!"

The twisted knot of three thin initials at the end of the letter stood for one of the set of names painted on the black door of the Temple Chambers.

The other names were those of Tom, who had strained a slender competence to become a barrister, and, finding the achievement unremunerative, had been glad enough to get the chance of sub-editing a paper in Edinburgh.

Dick enveloped and stamped his letter,

threw it on the table, and went into his bedroom. When he came back in a better coat and a newer tie he looked at the letter and shrugged his shoulders, and he frowned all the way down the three flights and as far as Brick Court. Here he posted the letter. Then he shrugged his shoulders again, but after the second shrug the set of them was firmer.

As his hansom swung through the dancing lights of the Strand, he shrugged his shoulders for the third time.

And, at that, his tame devil came as at a signal, and drew a pretty curtain across all thoughts save one—the thought of the "other man's girl." Indeed, hardly a thought was left; rather a sense of her—of those disquieting, soft eyes of hers—the pretty hands, the frank laugh—the long, beautiful lines her gowns took on—the unexpected twists and curves of her hair—above all the reserve, veiling tenderness as snow-flakes might veil a red rose, with which she spoke of the other man.

Dick had known Tom for all of their men's lives, and they had been friends. Both had said so often enough. But now he thought of him as the "other man."

The lights flashed past. Dick's eyes were fixed on a picture. A pleasant room—an artist's room—print sketches, green curtains, the sparkle of old china, fire and candlelight. A girl in a long, straight dress—he could see the little line where it would catch against her knee as she came forward to meet him with both hands outstretched. Would

it be both hands? He decided that it would—to-night.

He was right, even to the little line in the sea-blue gown.

Both hands—such long, thin, magnetic hands.

"You *are* good," she said, at once. "Oh—you must let me thank you. Tom's told me who it was that got him that splendid berth. Oh—what a friend you are! And lending him the money and everything. I can't tell you—it's too much— You are——"

"Don't," he said, "it's nothing at all."

"It's everything," said she. "Tom's told me quite all about it, mind! I know we owe everything to you."

"My dear Miss Harcourt," he began. But she interrupted him.

"Why not Harry?" she asked. "I thought——"

"Yes. Thank you. But it was nothing. You see, I couldn't let poor old Tom go on breaking his heart in silence, when just writing a letter or two would put him in a position to speak."

She had held his hands, or he hers, or both, all this time. Now she moved away to the fire.

"Come and sit down, and be comfortable," she said. "This is the chair you like. And I've got some cigarettes, your very own kind, from the Stores."

She remembered a time when she had thought that it was he, Dick, who might break his heart for her. The remembrance of that vain thought was a constant pin-prick to her vanity, a constant affront to her modesty. She had tried to snub him in those days—to show him that his hopes were vain. And, after all, he hadn't had any hopes; he'd only been anxious about Tom! In the desolation of her parting from Tom she had longed for sympathy. Dick had given it, and she had been kinder to him than she had ever been to any man but her lover. First, because he was her lover's friend, and secondly, because she wanted to pretend to herself that she had never fancied that there was any reason for not being kind to him.

She sat down in the chair opposite to him.

"Now," she said, "I won't thank you

any more, if you hate it so, but you *are* good, and neither of us will ever forget it."

He sat silent for a moment. He had played for this—for this he had delayed to answer the letter wherein Tom announced his intention of telling Harriet the whole fair tale of his friend's goodness. He had won the trick. Yet for an instant he hesitated to turn it over. Then he shrugged his shoulders—I won't mention this again, but it was a tiresome way he had when the devil or the guardian angel were working that curtain I told you of, and said:

"Dear little lady—you make me wish that I *were* good."

Then he sighed; it was quite a real sigh, and she wondered whether he could possibly not be good right through. Was it possible that he was wicked in some of those strange, mysterious ways peculiar to men—billiards—barmaids—opera-balls—flashed into her mind. Perhaps she might help him to be good. She had heard the usual pretty romances about the influences of a good woman.

"Come," she said, "light up—and tell me all about everything."

So he told her many things. And now and then he spoke of Tom, just to give himself the pleasure-pain of that snow-veiled-rose aspect.

He kissed her hand when he left her—a kiss of studied brotherliness. Yet the kiss had in it a tiny heart of fire, fierce enough to make her wonder, when he had left her—whether, after all— But she put the thought away hastily.

"I may be a vain fool," she said, "but I won't be fooled by my vanity twice over."

And she kissed Tom's portrait, and went to bed.

Dick went home in a heavenly haze of happiness—so he told himself as he went. When he woke up at about three o'clock, and began to analyze his sensations, he had cooled enough to call it an intoxication of pleasurable emotion. At three in the morning, if ever, the gilt is off the gingerbread.

Dick lay on his back, his hands clinched at his sides, and, gazing open-

eyed into the darkness, he saw many things. He saw all the old friendships; the easy, jolly life in those rooms, the meeting with Harriet—it was at a Slade dance, and she wore the white and black dress of a Beardsley lady; he remembered the contrast of the dress with her eyes and mouth.

He saw the days when his thoughts turned more and more to every chance of meeting her, as though each had been his only chance of life. He saw the Essex Court sitting-room as it had looked on the night when Tom had announced that Harriet was the only girl in the world—adding, at almost a night's length, that impassioned statement of his hopeless financial condition. He could hear Tom's voice, as he said:

"And I *know* she cares!"

Dick felt again the thrill of pleasure that had come with the impulse to be, for once, really whole; to efface himself, to give up the pursuit that lighted his days, the dream that enchanted his nights. His own voice, too, he heard:

"Cheer up, old chap. We'll find a lucrative post for you in five minutes, and set the wedding bells a-ringing in half an hour, or less! Why on earth didn't you tell me before?"

The glow of conscious nobility had lasted a long while—nearly a week, if he recollected aright. Then had come the choice of two openings for Tom, one in London, and one, equally good, in Edinburgh. Dick had chosen to offer to his friend the one in Edinburgh. He had told himself then that both lovers would work better if they were not near enough to waste each other's time, and he had almost believed—he was almost sure, even now, that he had almost believed—that this was the real reason.

But when Tom had gone, there had been frank tears in the lovers' parting, and Dick walked up the platform to avoid the embarrassment of witnessing them.

"You beast, you brute, you hound," said Dick, to himself, lying rigid and wretched in the darkness. "You knew well enough that you wanted him out of the way. And you promised to look after her, and keep her from being dull.

And you've done all you can to keep your word, haven't you? She hasn't been dull, I swear. And you've been playing for your own hand—and that poor, stupid, honest chap down there slaving away and trusting you as he trusts God. And you've written him lying letters twice a week, and betrayed him, as far as you got the chance, every day, and seen what a cur you are, every night, as you see it now. Oh, yes—you're succeeding splendidly. She forgets to think of Tom when she's talking to you. How often did *she* mention him last night? It was *you* every time. You're not fit to speak to a decent man, you reptile."

He relaxed his clinched hands.

"Can't you stop this infernal see-saw?" he asked, pounding at his pillow; "light and fire every day, and hell-black ice every night. Look at it straight, you coward. If you're game to face the music, why, face it. Marry her, and friendship and honesty be damned. Or, perhaps, you might screw up to another noble act—not a shoddy one, this time."

Still sneering, he got up and pottered about in slippers and pyjamas till he had stirred together the fire and made himself cocoa. He drank it, and smoked two pipes. This is very unromantic, but so it was. He slept after that.

When he awoke in the morning all things looked brighter. He almost succeeded in pretending that he did not despise himself.

But there was a letter from Tom, and the guardian angel took charge of the curtain again.

He was tired, brain and body. The prize seemed hardly worth the cost. The question of relative values, at any rate, seemed debatable. The day passed miserably.

At about five o'clock he was startled to feel the genuine throb of an honest impulse. Such an impulse in him at that hour in the day, when usually the devil was arranging the curtain for the evening's tragi-comedy, was so unusual as to arouse in him a psychologic interest strong enough to come near to destroying its object. But the flame of pleasure lighted by the impulse fought

successfully against the cold wind of cynical analysis, and he stood up.

"Upon my word," said he, "the copy books are right. Be virtuous, and you will be happy. At least, if you aren't, you won't. And if you are——? One could but try!"

He packed a bag. He went out and sent telegrams to his people at Kings Lynn, and to all the folk in town with whom he ought in these next weeks to have danced and dined. And he wrote a telegram to her. But that went no farther than the floor of the Fleet Street post office, where it lay in trampled scattered rhomboids.

Then he dined in Hall—he could not spare from his great renunciation even such a thread of a thought as should have been decided his choice of a restaurant; and he went back to the gloomy little rooms and wrote a letter to Tom.

It seemed, until his scientific curiosity was aroused by the seeming, that he wrote with his heart's blood. After the curiosity awoke, the heart's blood was only highly-colored water.

"Look here. I can't stand it any longer. I'm a brute and I know it and I know you'll think so. The fact is I've fallen in love with your Harry, and I simply can't bear it, seeing her every day almost and knowing she's yours and not mine" (there the analytic demon pricked up its ears and the scratching of the pen ceased.) "I have fought against it," the letter went on, after a long pause. "You don't know how I've fought, but it's stronger than I am. I love her—impossibly, unbearably—the only right and honorable thing to do is to go away, and I'm going. My only hope is that she'll never know."
YOUR OLD FRIEND."

As he scrawled the signatory hieroglyphic, his only hope was that she *would* know it, and that the knowledge would leaven, with tenderly pitying thoughts of him, the heroic figure, her happiness with Tom, the commonplace.

He addressed and stamped the envelope; but he did not close it.

"I might want to put in another word or two," he said to himself. And even then in his inmost heart he hardly knew that he was going to her. He knew it when he was driving toward Chenies Street, and then he told himself that he

was going to bid her good-by—forever. Angel and devil were so busy shifting the curtain to and fro that he could not see any scene clearly.

He came into her presence pale with his resolution to be noble—to leave her forever to happiness—and Tom. It was difficult, though, even at that supreme moment, to look at her and to couple those two ideas.

"I've come to say good-by," he said.

"Good-by?" The dismay in her eyes seemed to make that unsealed letter leap in his side pocket.

"Yes—I'm going—circumstances I can't help—I'm going away for a long time."

"Is it bad news? Oh—I *am* sorry. When are you going?"

"To-morrow," he said, even as he decided to say "to-night."

"But you can stay a little while now, can't you? Don't go like this. It's dreadful. I shall miss you so——"

He fingered the letter.

"I must go and post a letter; then I'll come back—if I may? Where did I put that hat of mine?"

As she turned to pick up the hat from the table, he dropped the letter—the heart's blood written letter—on the floor behind him.

"I'll be back in a minute or two," he said, and went out, to walk up and down the far end of Chenies Street, and picture her, alone with his letter.

She saw it at the instant when the latch of her flat clicked behind him. She picked it up and mechanically turned it over to look at the address:

He, in the street outside, knew just how she would do it. Then she saw that the letter was unfastened.

How often had Tom said that there were to be no secrets between them! This was *his* letter. But it might hold Dick's secret. But, then, if she knew Dick's secret she might be able to help him. He was in trouble—any one could see that—awful trouble. She turned the letter over and over in her hands.

He, without, walking with half-closed eyes, felt that she was so turning it.

Suddenly, she pulled the letter out, and read it. He, out in the gas-lit night,

knew how it would strike at her pity, her tenderness, her strong love of all that was generous and noble. He pictured the scene when he should re-enter her room, and his heart beat wildly. He held himself in; he was playing the game now in deadly earnest. He would give her time to think of him, to pity him—time, even, to wonder whether, after all, duty and honor had not risen up in their might to forbid him to dare to try his faith by another sight of her. He waited, keenly aware that long as the waiting was to him, who knew what the ending was to be, it must be ten times as long for her, who did not know.

At last he went back to her. And the scene that he had pictured in the night where the east wind swept the street was acted out now, exactly as he had foreseen it.

She held in her hand the open letter. She came toward him still holding it.

"I've read your letter," she said.

In her heart she was saying: "I must be brave. Never mind modesty and propriety. Tom could never love me like this. *He's a hero—my hero.*"

In the silence that followed her confession he seemed to hear almost the very words of her thought.

He hung his head, and stood before her in the deep humility of a chidden child.

"I am sorry," he said. "I am ashamed. Forgive me, I couldn't help it. No one could. Good-by. Try to forgive me—"

He turned to go, but she caught him by the arms. He had been almost sure she would.

"You mustn't go," she said. "Oh—I am sorry for Tom—but it's not the same for him— There are lots of people he'd like just as well—but you—"

"Hush," he said, gently, "don't think of me. I shall be all right. I shall get over it."

His sad, set smile assured her that he never would—never, in this world or the next.

Her eyes were shining with the stress of the scene; his with the charm of it.

"You are so strong, so brave, so

good," she made herself say. "I can't let you go— Oh—don't you see—I can't let you suffer— You've suffered so much already—you've been so noble. Oh—it's better to know now. If I'd found out later—"

She hung her head, and waited.

But he would not spare her. Since he had sold his soul, he would have the price; the full price, to the last blush—the last tear, the last tremble in the pretty voice.

"Let me go," he said, and his voice shook with real passion; "let me go—I can't bear it." He took her hands gently from his arms, and held them lightly.

Next moment they were around his neck, and she was clinging wildly to him.

"Don't be unhappy! I can't bear it. Don't you see? Ah—don't you see?"

Then he allowed himself to let her know that he did see. When he left her an hour later she stood in the middle of her room and drew a long breath.

"Oh!" she cried. "What have I done? What have I done?"

He walked away with the maiden fire of her kisses thrilling his lips. "I've won—I've won—I've won!" his heart sang within him.

But when he awoke in the night—these months had taught him the habit of waking in the night and facing his soul—he said:

"It was very easy, after all—very, very easy. And was it worth while?"

But the next evening, when they met, neither tasted in the other's kisses the bitterness of last night's regrets. And in three days Tom was to come home.

He came. All the long way in the rattling, shaking train a song of delight sang itself over and over in his brain. He, too, had his visions, he was not too commonplace for those. He saw her, her bright beauty transfigured by the joy of reunion, rushing to meet him with eager hands and gladly given lips. He thought of all he had to tell her. The fifty pounds saved already. The editor's probable resignation, his own, almost certain promotion, the incredibly dear possibility of their marriage before another year had passed. It seemed a

month before he pressed the electric button at her door, and pressed it with a hand that trembled for joy.

The door opened, and she met him; but this was not the radiant figure of his vision. It seemed to be not she, but an image of her—an image without life, without color.

"Come in," she said, "I've something to tell you."

"What is it?" he asked, bluntly, "what's happened, Harry? What's the matter?"

"I've found out," she said, slowly, but without hesitation; had she not rehearsed the speech a thousand times in these three days? "I've found out that it was a mistake, Tom. I—I love somebody else. Don't ask who it is. I love him. Ah—*don't!*"

For his face had turned a leaden white, and he was groping blindly for something to hold on to.

He sat down heavily on the chair where Dick had knelt at her feet the night before. But now it was she who was kneeling.

"Oh, *don't*, Tom, dear—*don't!* I can't bear it. I'm not worth it. He's so brave and noble—and he loves me so."

"And don't *I* love you?" said poor Tom, and then, without ado or disguise, he burst into tears.

She had ceased to think or to reason. Her head was on his shoulder, and they clung blindly to each other and cried like two children.

When Tom went to the Temple that night he carried a note from Harry to

Dick. With sublime audacity and a confidence deserved, she made Tom her messenger.

"It's a little secret," she said, smiling at him, "and you're not to know."

Tom thought it must be something about a Christmas present for himself. He laughed, a little shakily, and took the note.

Dick read it, and crushed it in his hand, while Tom poured out his full heart.

"There's been some nonsense while I was away," he said; "she must have been dull and unhinged—you left her too much alone, old man. But it's all right now. She couldn't care for any one but me, after all, and she knew it directly she saw me again. And we're to be married before next year's out, if luck holds."

"Here's luck old man!" said Dick, lifting his whiskey. When Tom had gone to bed, weary with the quick sequence of joy, and misery, and recurrent joy, Dick read the letter again.

"I can't do it," said the letter; "it's not in me. He loves me too much. And I *am* fond of him. He couldn't bear it. He's weak, you see. He's not like you—brave, and strong, and noble. But I shall always be better because you've loved me. I'm going to try to be brave, and noble, and strong like you. And you must help me, dear. God bless you. Good-by."

"After all," said Dick, as he watched the white letter turn in the fire to black, gold spangled; "after all, it was not so easy. And, oh, how it would have been worth while!"



AT MRS. BIDWELL'S TEA

By Charles Battell Loomis

Author of "My Neighbor's Pride," "Cheerful Americans," Etc.

I HAVE always been one of those who decried as childish the tendency of the average man to laugh at the slap-stick style of humor so prevalent on the variety stage and in the pages of the comic weeklies.

I have said that it was not the highest form of wit to "swat" a man in the face with a bag of flour, or to cause him to slide down a flight of steps when in the act of making a dignified bow of departure, and I find that when such things as those I have described happen in real life those of us who are sympathetic do not laugh.

Why, take the series of most wildly improbable and farcical things that actually happened at Mrs. Bidwell's tea the other afternoon, and which were anything but laughable to me.

I am Mr. Bidwell and—yes, you have guessed it—Mrs. Bidwell is the partner of my joys and sorrows, and we divided a plenty of the latter last Thursday.

We have lived in Brantford, New Jersey, for three years, and during that time Mrs. Bidwell has repeatedly said that she ought to give a tea and invite her New York friends, for she is always going to "cobweb parties" and private concerts and exhibitions of pictures at their various apartments and studios, while we have never made any return for these civilities.

I was pretty certain that few of our friends in New York would care to venture out as far into the suburbs as Brantford, because the comic papers have drawn such pictures of the sections outlying New York that many people to the city born think New Jersey and Long Island perfectly impos-

sible places, and then a trip there, in the fall or winter, is not one to be lightly undertaken.

However, Mrs. Bidwell dispatched about fifty invitations, and while she was writing the notes she said to me:

"Thursday week is the seventeenth, isn't it?" and I, immersed in my morning paper, said, without thinking:

"Yes."

But it wasn't. Thursday week was the twenty-fourth.

However, the invitations all went out setting apart the seventeenth as the day for the tea, while all the time Mrs. Bidwell intended having it a week later.

I was surprised at the number who accepted. There were upward of thirty-five. As trains do not run frequently on the D. P. & J. road, Mrs. Bidwell advised all to take the one arriving at Brantford at three-five, and most of them said they would take it.

This much of explanation has been necessary. After this it is to be hoped that the action will be more rapid, although anything but pleasant.

Mrs. Bidwell is an absent-minded sort of body, and the morning of the seventeenth dawned without her once thinking that this was the day she had set for her tea. She still thought that the festivities were yet a week off, and, of course, had not begun to make any preparations whatever for it, beyond stripping the paper from the parlor walls, because we intended celebrating the event with new paper and a new ceiling, several pieces of fallen plaster having given us warning that the old ceiling was tired of maintaining its position.

As for me, I never interfere with my wife's doings, and I gave no thought to the tea. I intended to be present at it, and I considered *that* an act of devotion, as anything more wishy-washy than a tea or even tea itself I cannot imagine. An afternoon "beer" would have some tone, but a tea—

At two o'clock of the day Miss Haskell, one of our near neighbors, and a very pretty girl, came to the house. I was home with a clinging cold, and I was also helping my wife make ready for the plasterers, so I went to the door. Miss Haskell was dressed in a beauty pink silk, with roses in her hair, and a "kissmequick" over her head and shoulders, and she looked like an orchid for delicacy. Much astonished, I said:

"How de do? I hardly feel like asking any one of such magnificence in, because the house is upside down, and Eleanor looks like a fright with her dusting cap on. She's on the rampage."

But Miss Haskell came right in, laughing gayly and saying:

"Well, as I am going to help pour tea, I guess she expects me. And she hasn't much time. They'll be here in half an hour."

"They? Who?" said I, thoroughly bewildered, as I helped Miss Haskell over a pail of water and a fallen step-ladder that blocked the way to the parlor.

"Why, the guests. Mercy on us! What *have* you been doing?"

She had seen the wreck of the parlor. Shreds of paper here and there, nothing on the mantel, a stack of pictures standing in the corner, a sheet over the piano, and no other furniture in the room.

"Do you mean to say that any one is coming to this house to-day?" asked I in consternation at the thought.

"Why, this is the day for your wife's tea, and the guests will be here on the three-five."

Just then Mrs. Bidwell came up from the cellar, where she had been burning some of the wall paper in the furnace and having a beautiful time. She was a sight. She is my wife, but I repeat

it, she was a sight. A dusting cap on her head very much awry, a pair of unbecoming spectacles which she always wears when she is house-cleaning, for nobody knows *what* hygienic reason, a smudge of ashes on her cheekbone; she did not look much like a divinity who was soon to preside over a Russian samovar and say with a bewitching smile: "Which shall it be—cream or lemons?"

She advanced and, smudge and all, kissed Miss Haskell affectionately, and never noticed that her lovely neighbor was dressed in her best. Mrs. Bidwell is one of the most absent-minded women I ever knew.

"Eleanor, do you intend having a tea to-day?" I said.

"No, dear." And then, with a realizing smile: "What an absurd question. Does this look like a tea house? It's next week."

"That's what I thought," said I, in relieved tones. "Miss Haskell was trying to frighten me with the statement that guests were coming to this wreck of a house to-day."

"And they are," said Miss Haskell, stoutly, her color rising. "Eleanor Bidwell, this is the seventeenth, and you told me that the tea was to be on the seventeenth. I've come in to pour."

Mrs. Bidwell ran out into the hall and consulted a calendar. Then she gave a little hysterical shriek.

"Edward, it *is*! They *are*! What *shall* I do? Not a thing in the house."

"I think there's a great deal in the house," said I, surveying the chaos that surrounded me. "It might be exposed to better advantage, but it's all here."

"Oh, don't joke," said Mrs. Bidwell, wringing her hands. "What shall we do? We haven't time to do more than make tea."

"Well, that's what they're coming for," said I, consolingly. "Coming thirty miles for a small cup of tea and a lady-finger."

"But there aren't any lady-fingers, and there's no time to go to Passaic, and how will they get here? I haven't said a word to the hackman, and he has only that ramshackle depot hack."

"They'll have to walk. It won't kill 'em to walk half a mile. The ground is hard to-day. And that will give you time to get something on that is a little less like a scarecrow."

I regret to say that Mrs. Bidwell is never able to cope with unusual conditions. I am the executive of the family in all emergencies, and I now sent Eleanor out to the kitchen to tell the cook to make tea in the wash-boiler, as we were expecting a houseful of people on the three-five. Then I sent her upstairs to put on her handsome habiliments, while Miss Haskell, donning the kitchen apron that my wife had discarded, helped me to move the furniture into something resembling order. We could not hang the pictures, as the nails had all been pulled out and the molding ripped off. At best, our parlor was *en déshabillé*.

Of course it was too late to turn back our guests. And the "tea"—or "reception" (if anything happened to the wash-boiler)—must be held in our house, as it was much too late to requisition the house of a neighbor.

Mrs. Bidwell may not have much executive ability, but she can dress like a hurricane, and by the time that Miss Haskell and I had put parlor, dining-room and hall (which is nothing more than a large room) into something like order, Eleanor came downstairs looking just as pretty as she did the day I married her, and that's saying a good deal.

"When Leonard comes home from school," said Miss Haskell, "you can send him over to our house for all the cake that mother made to-day. We can spare it just as well as not, and it's those iced sponge cakes that you like so."

Eleanor's gratitude was pathetic. She saw herself being miraculously dragged out of the pit which her absent-mindedness had dugged for her, and felt that she was blessed beyond her deserts.

School is nearby, and Leonard came home before the whistle of the three-five announced the approach of the dread train with its bevy of unwelcome guests.

He was at once dispatched to the Haskells for the sponge cakes, and then I realized that I was in my dressing-gown and slippers, and I was sent upstairs to don a frock coat.

The house still looked like Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," but most of our guests knew how absent-minded Eleanor is, and they would make allowances.

I was nearly dressed when I heard the creak of wheels and saw the depot hack coming toward the house.

For some months I have supposed that each day it would follow the example of the one hoss shay and drop to pieces, and its staying powers have been the wonder of all Brantford, but to-day its hours were numbered.

As I watched it begin to turn in at our driveway, I saw the most singular sight that I ever witnessed outside of the "Voyage en Suisse" of the Hanlons.

The bottom of it suddenly dropped out, and two well-turned but sturdy ankles encased in black gaiters and white stockings fell through to the ground, where the feet on the end of them, moved by an instinct of self-preservation, began to pad along the road in an effort to keep up with the hack, which the hare-brained driver had not sense enough to stop. Perhaps he did not know what had happened.

Now I swear to you that the spectacle did not strike me as funny, but, as showing the different ways in which different people view the same thing, I heard shrieks of laughter from Eleanor and Miss Haskell, who happened to be looking out of the parlor window.

I flung open the window and yelled: "Stop, you fool!"

And he stopped, and then I beheld at the carriage casement the sweet and rubicund face of dear old Mrs. MacAlister, whose only fault is that there is something too much of her. There was also something too much for the hack, hence the refusal of the floor to bear her any farther.

I jumped out of my bedroom, literally jumped out of it, shaking the stairs in my headlong descent, and

without a scarf but otherwise arrayed for the tea, I ran to the assistance of my dear old friend.

She was unable to climb out of the cage in which she was imprisoned, and I had to smash the threshold of the door with my feet, an easy and a grateful task, and then I led the blushing old lady forth from her queer retreat—or perhaps I should call it her queer advance—and brought her to the house.

A glass of sherry revived her, but she elected to go upstairs to our room, which is over the parlor, thinking that by lying down she could restore her nerves to their wonted calm.

And thus began our "tea"; the first guest incapacitated from attending, owing to the inadequate transportation facilities afforded by the town.

The rest of our guests arrived in a sort of mob, some of them, I am sure, inwardly cursing the day that had made them leave good old New York to come to the other side of the horizon. Of course, I refer to the men, of whom there were three or four, most of them artists.

I know that they were astonished when they gained admittance to our house and viewed the wreckage—for our efforts could not restore wall-paper in an instant, and to see great segments of green paper like the division lines in a backgammon board, relieved by copious masses of dirty white, was to make one wonder whether this was an ordinary suburban effect or only a case of Eleanor's absent-mindedness. However, the beauty of social forms is that by them we are enabled to cover up our real feelings and, save by very covert glances of wonder given by careful housewives at the palpable evidences of much and disturbed dust, there was no sign vouchsafed that ours was not a very regular tea.

There was a heterogeneous collection of musicians, artists, bookish people and society folk, and the hum that arose was a veritable tea hum.

And yet there was no tea. Miss Haskell, looking as pretty as two peaches, was sitting at a little table containing sliced lemons and loaf sugar

and cream and tea cups, but innocent of tea. Rangeley, the purple snow man, was making himself agreeable to her, and she was taking an immense interest in something that would not have interested her five minutes before, nor ever would again, that being the real test of small talk; but she was destitute of tea. I went to Eleanor, who, entirely forgetting that she had more than one guest, was talking to Mrs. Birchen in the corner about Wagner's "Quiet Life."

I interrupted her to talk about the tea, and she immediately excused herself to Mrs. Birchen and went out into the kitchen, where, as she afterward told me, she found Jane wringing her hands quite impotently. She had attempted to empty all the tea there was in the house into the tea kettle (she had scorned the wash-boiler) and she had spilled every grain of it into the coal scuttle instead and so that settled it—before it was made. It never occurred to either her or to my devoted but absent-minded wife to borrow some from a neighbor, and there are no stores in Brantford. (That is one of the charms of the place—to those who are used to it.)

Eleanor came to me, and without going into details whispered what had happened. I was talking at the time to a very swagger young woman who sings at St. Swithin's, and so I merely said:

"Never mind. It was very poor tea. They wouldn't have liked it. It is better so. Besides, there will be cake."

Just then Miss De Kaven, the animal painter, said in her orotund voice:

"Where's Leonard? I haven't seen him in an age. I suppose he's grown out of all remembrance."

And I, looking out of the window, said:

"Here he comes. He's been on an errand."

All who heard me looked out of the window, for Leonard is a general favorite, and has often accompanied his mother to New York teas and things, so most of us saw him demolish our last hope of a collation. He slipped on a bit of ice and fell, scattering the

sponge cakes far and wide, and sitting down on as many of them as his small body could cover.

I groaned.

"Oh, he isn't hurt," said the St. Within soprano.

"No, it was the cake I was thinking of. These are maimed ceremonies."

And then the beautiful soprano in a way forcing the words out, said:

"Did you mean to be without a cravat?"

And Eleanor had never noticed it. I started to go upstairs and get it, but just then something happened that put all thought of neckties out of my mind.

Just about this time dear old Mrs. MacAllister, thinking that she had lain long enough, resolved to get up. As I have said, my flight down the staircase had been a very jarring one, and when she set her two solid feet upon the bedroom floor and followed them up with the weight of her body, it was too much for the weak parlor ceiling, and it fell with a deafening crash and a choking smell of plaster dust.

Luckily our rooms are low-ceiled and the plaster had not far to come, but I had not anticipated any such vaudeville attraction, nor had any of my guests, and they were not prepared for it.

In a farce comedy a syphon of soda would have given pith to the next joke. We were spared that, but there was a climax just the same for poor Mrs. MacAllister, who had heard the commotion and the stifled shrieks and had seen the tremendous cloud of dust which penetrated everywhere, and whose nerves were on edge, attempted to run downstairs and *fell* down instead.

Those who saw her say it was very

funny. I did not see her, as I was trying to get the dust out of both my eyes, and besides, a fall at her time of life—she is nearly fifty-five—is not to be laughed at by anybody. Bartley, the water colorist, helped her to her feet with all the gallantry that has made him a much courted man, and escorted her back to bed again, and I am pleased to say that the superabundance of flesh on her bones saved them and her from any lasting injury.

What followed is more or less mixed in my mind, but I do know that it was found that no one was really hurt, although several dresses were ruined. In fact, I have only recited the events of the afternoon, in order to show that what would have been very funny upon the stage and would have been certain to tickle the ears of the groundlings was not regarded by me as being in the slightest degree funny, having occurred in real life and in my own house.

The next train to town bore a crowd of dusty travelers, and I have no doubt but that they passed resolutions to the effect that living in the suburbs was always attended by the most direful results, whereas it was simply a case of absent-mindedness on the part of Mrs. Bidwell that had laid the train for all these catastrophes.

Mrs. MacAllister was too shaken up to return on the four-thirty, so she spent the night with us, to our great delight, and in course of time Mrs. Bidwell, Miss Haskell, Mrs. MacAllister, Leonard and myself sat down to a satisfying dinner.

"I think we have done all we can for our city friends," said Eleanor in her absent-minded way.

Leonard giggled.

AROUND MY BEER MUG

By Poultney Bigelow

Author of "Children of the Nations," "History of the German Struggle for Liberty,"
"White Man's Africa," Etc.

"YOU need more Munich!"
"How so," said I, thinking
that the reference was to more
beer.

But no one had spoken—no one was
near me but my *maaskrug* or stein of
foaming Hofbräu.

It had upon its side the picture of a
child with large eyes, suggesting in-
finite charity for human weakness.
The child was dressed in the garb of a
friar, and his little dumpy right hand
was raised as for a benediction.

I am not superstitious, but if ever a
beer mug talked this one did.

Nor was this at a pilgrim's shrine in
the Bavarian Alps—no, it was in the
hurly-burly of New York's noisiest
thoroughfare—under the shadow of
monstrous human hives whose stories
are numbered by the dozen—the click
of the ticker mingled with the dropping
of the beer lids—the roar of the elevated
trains came in upon me from Herald
Square—the fire-alarm gongs in front
of the electric cars banged furiously—
the clatter of the trucks arose to the
open window like the report of mag-
azine rifles.

Three men came in and sat down
near me; also three women with ex-
pensive hats. They ordered six glasses,
drank them down as though they were
so many cocktails, smacked their lips,
paid, and within five minutes of their
entrance were rushing off to some other
distraction.

As they passed me I heard:

"Say! there ain't nothing in Europe
can touch New York—is they?"

The Beer Mug gave a shudder—the
baby friar frowned.

"You need more Munich," said the
voice.

The Beer Mug spoke:

"In Munich we sip our beer slowly;
the husband takes his wife with him;
friends meet one another in the beer
gardens, and we chat and we talk about
the new books and the last play. Only
a barbarian would drink a glass of beer
in five minutes."

"Yes, but," said I, "those people who
just went out were in a hurry!"

"Only barbarians are in a hurry!"
answered the Beer Mug. "What do
you hurry for? To make more money!
Your hurrying is a habit. If you came
to Munich we would civilize you out of
it. No one is in a hurry in Munich,
save those whom we despise. Besides,
did you notice those three ladies who
just went out? They had upon their
persons clothing more expensive than
necessary. The cost of those three hats
alone would have paid the rent of a
very good apartment in Munich for a
whole year!"

"Rents are not high here," quoth I.
"One can get a very fair little flat for
about two thousand a year!"

"In Munich," answered the Beer
Mug gravely, "you can get a flat twice
as handsome for one third of that rent."

"But how do you manage it?"

"We are civilized—that's all!" an-
swered the Beer Mug. "You *think* you
are."

"Yes, but——"

"Excuse me," said the Beer Mug, "I

know what you are going to say—all Americans say it—so don't waste your breath. Let us not discuss what is civilization. Let me tell you what you can learn in Munich, and then tell me what you can teach me in New York.

"First of all the shop girl of Munich can go to the theatre and listen to the most inspiring opera in the world. The prices here are too high. In Munich you may go to the opera at half past six and be in bed by half past ten—and the performance will have cost you twenty-five cents. Even in the stalls you will pay less than a dollar and a half. There at once you have one of the mightiest forces of our civilization. And in Munich you will find the opera crowded night after night throughout the year. Students, shop girls, working people standing up for four hours, all for the sake of higher culture. Can you do that here? No. Your prices are prohibitive. Talk to a Macy shop girl about the motif of 'Tristan!' Will she know what you are talking about? In Munich every beer *kellnerin* will guide you to the best opera if you ask her."

"But how do you manage it?"

"That is the secret of our civilization. We have a Possart—Must I explain? Then learn that in Munich the dramatic interests of the people are cherished by the king and the state quite as jealously as the schools and the university. Possart rules the stage of Munich. He is not, as with us on Broadway, a speculator in human fashion—a seeker after money. Far from it. He is as far removed from social, political or mercantile whims as the president of Yale University or the lighthouse at Sandy Hook. He does not have to rake up sensational and shallow plays to please the monetary masses. He asks himself the single question: Is this art? Is it good? Will it do good? When he has made up his mind that the play is good, then he is equally sure that the good taste of Munich will support him—even though it takes some time for the people to be raised to his level. Last year in Munich Possart gave through-

out the summer season a series of Wagner opera with particular reference to the great number of travelers who stop at Munich. These performances were given in a building made for these performances alone. The highest talent was engaged. The theatre was crowded on each occasion. But so perfect was the ventilation and so excellent were all the arrangements that no inconvenience whatever was experienced. This summer there will be another Wagner cycle. You should go and hear it!"

"I shall," said I, with conviction.

"Now," said my Beer Mug, "I don't want to hurt your patriotic feelings. I am talking quite impersonally. You New Yorkers ought to build a municipal theatre in Central Park and select for its manager a man who ranks with Possart. And this man should be assisted by a committee of your best artists, men of letters, clergymen and philanthropists. Then you should put the prices down to the pockets of the working people. The rich people have other means of distraction. It is the poor who need the stimulus to their imagination."

"In Munich we do not see the dirty plays which are permitted in New York. We do not have actresses who owe their dramatic position to the divorce courts. We do not put upon the stage plays which run mainly because they picture the life of prostitutes and because they have been denounced from the pulpit."

"In Munich the father of the family subscribes to his seats at the play as solemnly as we here rent a pew in church. He goes once or twice in each week, and is always sure of seeing and hearing something that need not embarrass pure-minded women."

"But that would never go down here!" said I.

"Yes, it will," said the Beer Mug, prophetically, and I said:

"Amen!"

"Now," continued the Beer Mug, "I have come to Broadway to stay!"

"I'm glad of that," said I.

"Yes," said the Beer Mug, "we are

going to civilize you as our holy predecessors converted the heathen Germans, after the breaking up of the Roman Empire. We shall convert you also. We shall raise you to the level of Munich—in spite of yourselves. We shall baptize you in beer—not spurious, alcoholic beer, but the real beer of Munich!"

"But public sentiment here is opposed to beer!"

"That is only temporary. Just now you tax beer at the custom-house, but I am here in spite of the tax. I don't pay the tax—you pay the extra! In Munich you get a whole big mug like this for six cents; here you have to pay six times six cents—indeed, a little more, I think!"

"Yes," said I, "but that is protection!"

"What," said the Beer Mug, "can you call 'protection' a law that shuts out from you the light of civilization? You must repeal this law in the interest of temperance—of humanity. To-day I see drunkards all over New York. In Munich we don't know what a drunkard looks like. With us the beer is cheap and universal; here you tax it, and you get the curse of intemperance!"

"But," said I, "you surely don't mean to say that Munich has become the art center of Germany through its beer alone!"

"Certainly," said the Beer Mug. "It is our matchless Munich beer which has predisposed our people to that generous, tolerant and wholly humane attitude toward the stranger, and has drawn to our beautiful city the best art students from all over the world.

Why do they not go to Berlin?—because the beer there has produced a carping, coarse and material atmosphere. Before Munich developed the secret of making good beer it was much like Berlin. If the change is not due to the beer, you might just as well tell me that the greatness of America is not due to the Monroe Doctrine.

"In Munich the whole atmosphere is impregnated with the spirit of our Hofbräu. The nobleman sits down by the side of the peasant and both exchange sentiment over their *maas*. The good nature of our people knows no bounds. Ask a citizen of Munich the way, and he will walk you to the spot. The Prince Regent moves among his people like a benevolent Father Christmas; the very policemen apologize when they ask you to obey the city regulations. The streets are scrubbed from morning until night by apple-cheeked mountain maids; the cab drivers touch their hats to you and are thankful for your tip. Do you mean to say that any other city can furnish such a picture of municipal happiness? And if it is not my doing, pray tell me who else has done it, and why no other city in the world can imitate either my beer or my municipal virtues?"

"I am going to Munich," said I.

"Amen," said the Beer Mug.

"Waiter, my bill. What! forty cents for a liter of beer! and the Beer Mug said it was only six cents. Oh! but he meant in Munich! All right. Good-right, Beer Mug! Waiter, bring me the *Herald*! Let me see, what is the next steamer? We'll talk this over when I come back!"



NOMADS

WE are but pilgrims; and the skin
That covers us, the tent wherein,
Awake or sleeping, we abide
Till Death a dwelling house provide.

JOHN B. TABB.

THE BUGLE CALL OF THE FOUR-X BAR

By Oscar King Davis

JACKSON was in difficulty in the store.

The wife of old White Thunder had come to buy purple beads, although it was well known on the reservation that no one had worn purple beads for a long time, and the trader had none in stock.

It was the season of red beads, and Jackson was doing his best to convince wrinkled Mrs. White Thunder that it was her duty as the leader of Brûlé society to encourage the wearing of red. To them came the voice of Mrs. Jackson from the living-room back of the store.

"Oh, Tom!" it said, with that peculiar rising inflection that is half a question, half a command. "Oh, Tom!" it repeated, and now there was the definite drop which indicated to the practiced trader that it was time to respond in person. He called the chief clerk to take up the argument with the squaw, and went back to his wife.

"What do you suppose?" asked Mrs. Jackson, as he entered the room where she was sitting. "You remember those Wentworths that are visiting the Barrys, Wentworths from Boston?"

"Can't say that I exactly remember them," replied the trader, reflectively, "seeing as I never had the honor, and glory, and pleasure of making their acquaintance."

"Oh, well, you know what I mean," said his wife. "They have been there the last month or more."

"Have they?" said Jackson, slowly, and with the accent on the verb.

He was not much interested in these

social events which sometimes concerned his wife so greatly. For him the store furnished amusement as well as occupation, and he hoped, by steady attention to it, to be able after a few years more, to go where there would be more of the one and less of the other. But to Mrs. Jackson, born and reared in the East, the ways of the West had been hard enough to accept, and this life on the Indian reservation was so near the climax of the unbearable that she was glad even of the reflected excitement of the spasmodic gayety at the army post forty miles away, every incident of which was duly reported at the agency.

"Just listen to this," Mrs. Jackson said, ignoring her husband's question. "I found it in one of those old papers mother used to wrap up the things in the baby's box."

She spread out a torn page before her, and read:

"I hear from Boston that the antics of young Jack Colby have finally reached a climax in his complete disappearance from the haunts that used to know him so well. The disappearance has afforded no end of talk, and the sensational newspapers have embraced the opportunity to out-sensationalize themselves. There is some question as to whether Colby has simply removed himself from his usual circuit, or has really taken the more extreme course at which some of the sensationalists have been more than hinting. Since he came into the possession of the rather large estate of his paternal grandfather, about two years ago, young Colby has been maintaining a pace that has wrecked stronger men and larger fortunes. It was believed after the announcement of his engagement to Elizabeth Wentworth that the wild oats were all harvested—or at least sown—and he was settling down. His ven-

ture as a broker, however, seems to have been little more than a cover for a course of stock plunging on his own account with the inevitable result where money and recklessness undertake to fill the place of experience and skill.

"The story in Boston is that Miss Wentworth finally demanded that the young man effect a radical reform in his behavior, failing which she dismissed him definitely. The devil being entitled to his due, however, I am bound to say that the truth presents the young scapegrace in the rather more creditable light of offering his fiancée her release, which the young woman, with a spirit some newspaper novelists would describe as fine, declined, except upon condition, to accept. It ended with the establishment of a conditional probation. What the conditions were might not be difficult to imagine, and it may throw some light on them as well as on the subsequent course of the young man, to know that his 'disappearance' followed immediately upon this late interview with Miss Wentworth.

"There are those who say it is too bad, and in a way it is. It is another dreadful illustration of the results most likely to be obtained from the very dangerous policy of restraint which so many wealthy parents have deemed the wise course for their sons. When at last the heirs receive the inheritance, they are likely to come to what seems to them unlimited possibilities with unlimited appetite. Perhaps after all there is to be found in this last prank of young Colby some ground for hope that it is the beginning of a new attitude toward life with some realization of its responsibilities. Most persons, probably, will think he has taken a queer way for a start, but if this is young Colby's determination, his old friends, who are still his friends, will not condemn him."

"What do you think of that?" demanded Mrs. Jackson, as she finished reading. "That's the Wentworth girl who is visiting at Col. Barry's."

"Humph!" replied her husband. "If half of that stuff about him is so she's well out of it."

"Well," responded Mrs. Jackson, "I should think that after an experience like that she would want to visit the Barrys, or anybody else at the end of the earth."

"Mebbe," said the trader. "When was it?"

Mrs. Jackson turned over the torn page of her paper and finally found the date.

"Pshaw!" she exclaimed, with evident disappointment. "Two years ago."

"Perhaps the young cub went off somewhere to try a hand for himself," said the trader. He turned to go back to his store and the question of the beads, leaving his wife to speculate about the romance of Miss Wentworth and her reckless lover. "Mebbe he made a go of it. Y' can't tell," he added.

The fort, of course, had known about the affair when it occurred. It had occupied such space in the newspapers as few matters not of real national importance receive. Among the fort people the interest in such things increases with the distance. The married officers' quarters buzzed with the news for a while, and then it lapsed out of sight in the excitement of the arrival of a new commandant.

There was the promise of much more satisfactory social activity in the advent of Col. Barry and his family. Mrs. Barry had a reputation that extended throughout the army for tact, and skill, and ingenuity in devising and directing entertainments and amusements, and the colonel was well known to be heartily in favor of anything that would tend to make life happier at his post.

Now, however, interest had been revived by the report that Mrs. Wentworth and her daughter were coming to visit the Barrys. The news set all the fort in a flutter. Mrs. Thornton, whose husband had just transferred back to the old regiment after his promotion to a captaincy, had taken him out of it, walked out to the parade ground to witness for the nth time the ever-impressive ceremony of "Retreat," and was so completely absorbed in discussing the delightful prospect with Mrs. Brinklow, the wife of the senior lieutenant, that she forgot to jump when the evening gun was fired. But then, Mrs. Thornton having met Miss Wentworth when she was stationed at Fort Myer, was recognized along officers' row as a special authority on the expected guests.

The Wentworths had been at the fort long enough to have gone through the usual list of gayeties afforded by a military post. In the lull after the first

round of dances, rides, parades and shooting trips, when the question was "what next?" there came to the colonel the notification that the annual delivery of cattle for the government was about to be made at the reservation. He mentioned it at dinner, and said he supposed that meant that he should have to send over an officer to be present at the delivery in the capacity of an inspector.

"I never heard of such a thing," said Mrs. Wentworth. "What is it?"

"It's a regular performance at these Indian agencies," replied the colonel. "Uncle Sam is about to buy his winter supply of meat."

"For the army?" asked Mrs. Wentworth.

"Not quite," answered Col. Barry. "For the Indians."

"Why," exclaimed Mrs. Wentworth, "does the government feed them?"

"Oh, yes," said the colonel. "In the treaty of peace that was arranged with these Indians after Gen. Crook had whipped them into submission, it was provided that the government should furnish certain quantities of supplies of specified kinds to each Indian. There is a long list of the things, but meat is the principal one."

"How many Indians are there at this reservation, colonel?" asked Miss Wentworth.

"About seven thousand," replied Col. Barry. "At least there are that many on the rolls. You see it requires a lot of cattle to feed them all. Each adult is entitled to three pounds a day 'on the hoof,' as they say. I suppose there will be several thousand head delivered this time."

"How interesting!" said Mrs. Wentworth. "I suppose they are bought by the agent from the ranchmen about here."

"Not exactly," replied the colonel. "What is about to be done at the agency now is in reality only the delivery under a contract let in the regular way at Washington some time ago. The cattlemen whose bid has been accepted notifies the agent at the reservation about when he expects to arrive with the cat-

tle, which he drives up from his ranch. Then the agent notifies the commandant here, who sends over his inspector."

"Don't you think it would be interesting for us all to go over this time, George?" asked Mrs. Barry. "I'm sure Julia and Elizabeth would enjoy seeing it, and I should like it myself again."

"I can't imagine anything that would be more delightful," exclaimed the girl, without waiting for her mother's opinion.

Mrs. Wentworth was quite of the same mind.

"Then we'll go," said the colonel. "I don't know whether Black can put us up at the agency or not. He will probably have some people over himself, and Moberly may have arranged to stay there. But if he can't take us no doubt Jackson can."

"Rather doubtful, don't you think, George?" asked Mrs. Barry. "The Jacksons have so little room that is not occupied by the store, don't you know. Couldn't we take tents and camp?"

"Oh, that would be such fun!" said Miss Wentworth. "Please, Col. Barry, let us camp."

"All right," said the colonel. "I'll send over to the quartermaster, and see what sort of an outfit he can give us."

"Won't it be fine!" exclaimed the girl. "I wish I were where I could squeal."

The colonel laughed at her enthusiasm.

"How much of a party do you think we ought to make up?" he asked his wife.

They discussed it during the rest of the dinner, and when the quartermaster came in soon afterward they were prepared with all the plans and specifications upon which he was to work in outfitting them. The colonel sent word to the agent that he was coming himself for the inspection, and would bring a party with him, including some friends from the East.

"Huh!" said Black, when he read the note. "If he wants us to trot out our 'specimens' to make a show for his visitors, I guess he needn't worry. There'll be Injuns enough around that day."

Mrs. Black could hardly wait to tell the news to Mrs. Jackson. She had heard from the trader's wife the story of the romance of the girl who was about to come to the agency, and now she was actually to see and meet her. She was discussing it with Mrs. Jackson in the room back of the store one afternoon not long after they had heard that the party was coming, when they were interrupted by a voice outside the store singing a bugle call.

Every ranchman and settler in all the northwest cattle country knew the song. It was the bugle call of the Four-X Bar, the special song of the men on Col. Moberly's ranch, that had been used by them to quiet and steady their cattle for so long that all the cattle country recognized it as Col. Moberly's private mark. None but his cowboys sang it, and they always did. It had followed the wearers of the Four-X Bar brand on long drives over miles of bunch grass, and it had helped to make known the name of the owner of that brand for leagues and leagues of range country. Both women knew that it meant now that Col. Moberly and the cattle were not far away. As the singer finished the last bar he pulled up his pony in front of the store, and swung out of the saddle. Jackson opened the door of the living-room, and called out to his wife:

"Moberly has come with the cattle, and he's got a new foreman."

It was the foreman who brought the news of the arrival of the herd to the agency, and Jackson had never seen this singer before. He greeted the newcomer with just that exact shade of careful enthusiasm which his long practice among such men had taught him so well how to employ. It is the greeting which makes welcome, which says: "I am glad to see you," yet does not inquire your name, or your business, whence you came, how long you mean to stay, or where you intend to go. It takes you into comradeship while you remain, prepares you for a Godspeed when you depart, and at the same time informs you that life will go on as usual after you have gone. It attends strictly to its own affairs, and expects

you to do as much by yours, and it is unknown and incomprehensible in the East.

The new foreman transacted his business quickly, and rode away to his mates and the cattle. Jackson watched him out of sight, then promptly went back to his wife to report.

"He's a sizable chap," he said, "and he sure can ride. But it strikes me he ain't been overlong up hereaway."

"What's the matter, Tom?" asked Mrs. Jackson. "Didn't he know just how to take a drink, or stand one?"

"Oh, I guess he's all right," answered the trader. "Now, I suppose as soon as Col. Barry gets over from the fort they'll push her through."

"They ought to be over to-morrow," said his wife. "It's been long enough since word came from them."

There was a blur of haze about the horizon the morning that the party left the fort for the agency, the haze of Indian summer that was already filling the air and proclaiming the winter days about to come. The crisp autumn weather had broadened the dark stripe along the backs of the black-tailed deer and turned the brick red of the antelope into a dingy russet. The deep green bunch grass of the earlier summer had grown dull and brown. The hollows were sere and dun, and there was the hard yellow in the sunlight that foretells the days when hills are bare and skies are bleak.

As befitted a hard riding cavalry regiment, most of the party were on horseback. Those who did not care to travel in that manner rode in a Dougherty. The way led across the smooth, rolling prairie, and they traveled very rapidly. The camp outfit had been started away the day before so as to be ready for them upon their arrival at the agency. The girl was an enthusiastic and accomplished horsewoman and rode with the colonel. Her mother and Mrs. Barry were the only ones of the half dozen ladies in the party who started out in the wagon, frankly declaring that they were not up to a forty-mile ride. Their saddle horses were in leading, and they were to ride with the

others on nearing the agency. There is little in the scenery of that country to attract attention for long, and the two women fell to visiting in the heart-to-heart fashion of old friends who had had little opportunity for such talking in the constant occupation of the social life at the fort.

"I am very sorry to have it come to an end," said Mrs. Wentworth, at last, with a sigh. "But we have been here a long time, Florence, and after this I think we must go home."

"I wish you wouldn't, Julia," returned Mrs. Barry. "Elizabeth seems to be having such a good time."

"Yes, she is," said the girl's mother. "And I think it has helped her, but I'm afraid it's no use."

"You don't mean——?" began Mrs. Barry.

"Surely I do," said the other, divining her friend's meaning. "She does not forget. She has taken more interest here than I have seen her take for a long time. But I think it is beginning to pall."

"It is nearly two years now, isn't it?" asked Mrs. Barry.

"Quite," replied her friend. "Shall I tell you something? You won't misunderstand, I know. Elizabeth believes that he is somewhere out West, and I think she felt that perhaps if we came here for a time, she—it might—you understand?"

"Yes," said the colonel's wife, half musingly, "I understand, quite. But it could hardly be at the post, you know. We are so much by ourselves. Our world here is very small."

"I don't believe Elizabeth really thought or hoped it could be," said her mother. "I think that if he should appear here she would run away. Nothing could be more of a shock to her than to think this visit might be construed as going after him. It would nearly kill her. It is all so contradictory! You know he had some friends in Wyoming; Englishmen who were ranching there. He met them in London, and had often talked of visiting their ranch. Some one told a friend of Elizabeth that while on a hunting trip

in Wyoming he had met a man who was working as a cowboy who, he thought, might be Jack. He had never met Jack, but he knew about him."

"What do you think about it yourself, Julia?" asked her friend.

"Oh, I don't know what to think. If Elizabeth could forget it all I should be happy, although I liked him very much. But he was so wild it frightened me terribly."

"Suppose he did turn cowboy?"

"I think I should be glad," said Mrs. Wentworth. "I wouldn't care much what he did if he would only settle to something. If he wanted to be a ranchman he is quite able, and perhaps he is just learning how."

"You have never heard anything from him?"

"No. Unless what that friend in New York said could be called hearing."

"Did you never think that he doesn't mean to come back?" said Mrs. Barry.

"Yes. Sometimes I have, but Elizabeth—never."

The girl herself came flying back to tell them to hurry on, for the colonel had chosen the stopping place for luncheon.

"If hoping could only help," said Mrs. Barry.

"Ah, what an if!" said her friend, and in silence they drove on and rejoined the rest of the party.

It was a merry party in the camp that night. They were tired by the long ride, but for the girl and her mother the new experience was like a powerful elixir. To please the girl's fancy the colonel had established the camp with military routine. There was visiting with the people of the agency in the evening, but "Taps" sounded none too early for even the hardest campaigner.

"I shall turn you out early," the colonel said, as he bade them good-night. "Moberly is here with the cattle and we must get to work quickly. It is hard to hold so large a band steady."

It was indeed a difficult task to complete the transfer, and the spice of danger in it added to the interest. There were three counts—one by Col. Mo-

berly's representative, one by the agent, and one by the inspector from the fort. In case the counts of Col. Moberly and the agent did not tally the score of the inspector was taken as final.

The steers were cut out from the herd in bunches of from five to ten. As they left the herd the skillful cowboys strung them out in single file, so that they passed the tally keepers one by one.

The effect of keeping the cattle standing in a bunch, instead of allowing them to spread out as they do in grazing, becomes apparent in the herd almost immediately. They grow restless. They want to move out, and if they are kept together they will begin to "mill"; that is, the middle of the herd will march around and around in one direction, and those on the outside, with lowered heads and angry bellowing, will keep up a steady tramp in the opposite. Where the two movements touch, halfway in toward the center of the bunch, trouble impends, and it keeps the cowboys constantly on the watch to prevent a fight that might lead to a stampede.

It was a fine, fresh morning when Col. Barry and his party rode out from the camp at the agency to watch the transfer. A brisk ride of two miles brought them to the herd. The work had begun already, one of the officers of the party having preceded them to serve as inspector. Col. Moberly's cowboys were singing their bugle call at the top of their lungs, shouting and whooping as they rode constantly around the great bunch to keep the cattle standing until the work was finished.

Occasionally the outside line was assaulted by a cowboy who forced his pony deftly into the mass of cattle, then turned quickly and separated half a dozen from the bunch. These were strung out before the tally keepers and then joined the constantly increasing bunch which, before they were turned out for the winter's range, would bear the government brand. As the work progressed the steers in the big herd grew more and more restless, and be-

fore an hour had passed they had begun the steady march and counter-march of milling. The count kept on with no rest. It was a business to be over with as soon as possible. Little bands of Indians rode out to see what was going on, and with the middle of the forenoon the cattle delivery was in full swing.

Elizabeth Wentworth had all an Eastern girl's natural fear of cattle, but she had as well the high spirit and mettle of a thoroughbred. Every detail of the day's business was a source of new interest to her. The statement that steers will run down and trample to death a person on foot, but will not molest one on horseback, she was inclined to accept with incredulity until Col. Moberly himself had solemnly assured her that it was a fact. Mrs. Wentworth and Mrs. Barry were content to stay out by the tally keepers and quietly watch the progress of the work, but the girl rode about freely, keenly watching the great steers and talking with the ranchman. The gorgeous morning, with its brilliant sunlight and snapping breeze, the shouts and singing of the cowboys, the noise of the milling cattle, the Indians riding about in their bright costumes, all filled her with excitement.

"Col. Moberly," she said, when the ranchman stopped beside her for a moment's chat, "I want to cut out a bunch."

"You, Miss Wentworth!" exclaimed the cattleman. "Why, they'd knock you down in a minute. They're not used to side saddles and skirts, and they're milling pretty badly."

But the girl insisted. She had a good horse, she said, a Western horse from the fort that knew his business. She wasn't a bit afraid, and she was sure nothing would happen. In the end she won, but Col. Moberly stipulated that he, himself, should precede her. She protested that that meant that he would cut out the cattle and she would only follow. But Col. Moberly would do no more. Col. Barry was talking to the inspector and did not notice what the girl was doing until he

saw Moberly, with Miss Wentworth following close behind, send his horse into the shifting mass of cattle. Then it was too late to interfere.

As they forced their way into the herd and the excited steers closed around them the girl saw one of the cowboys, whom she had not noticed previously, riding rapidly toward them along the edge of the herd, his mouth, half open as if to shout an astonished protest. She laughed aloud at his expression, and then as she looked more closely at him the color fled from her face and she blanched as if ill. The next moment she caught the brush of a steer against her riding habit and swung around to face the work in hand.

But that instant's inattention was her undoing. As she faced to the front her horse's foot struck the edge of a long untenanted prairie dog hole. With a firm hand and a tight rein she might have checked him. But the reins lay loose in her hands. The horse's foot sank deep in the hole. He stumbled and fell. The cattle gave way and he struck his nose in the dirt. As she pitched forward the girl heard a crackling snap and felt her saddle slide down on the horse's neck. It flashed through her mind that the cinch had broken, and the next instant she was on her knees in the sand, looking straight into the

great brown eyes of a giant steer, and feeling his hot, moist breath in her face.

There was a fraction of a second when her mind was perfectly blank. Then she felt the horse beside her struggle to get to his feet, and she realized what had happened. It seemed to her that she faced inevitable death. She wondered, blindly, if her mother would recognize her. There was an instant of agonized waiting.

Then she was aware of a man on a horse at her side. He swung half out of his saddle, thrust his strong arm around her, and straightened up in his stirrups. As her head arose above the horns of the sullen, restless steers, high over all the shouts and cries of officers, cowboys, agency men and Indians, she heard the clear voice of Jack Colby singing the bugle call of the Four-X Bar.

The sudden, terrible tension relaxed and she sank back in his arms, exhausted, but safe and smiling.

"Jack!" she said.

"Beth!" he answered.

"Take me home."

"Yes," he said, "to our own home."

"Well, did you ever?" said Mrs. Black to the trader's wife at the store that night. "Moberly's new foreman was the man."



THE LACK IN WOMAN

"SHE is not humorous. She cannot jest
At life and death!" Oh, you who sheltered lay
Beneath a woman's heart, for whom she paid
Hard penalty that you might smile to-day,
Forgetting in a man-child's birth her pain,
Your jeer at her—how childish and how vain!
You at your best, what are you but a man?
You dream not how the veil is drawn aside
From a pure woman's sight, how well she sees
The outstretched arms of Grief, or Sin's sad pride.
If power to mock be of broad minds a test
Seek ye the place where Christ found food for jest!

CLINTON DANGERFIELD.

INVOCATION TO SUMMER

By Clinton Scollard

O SUMMER, from your lavish store,
Treasures of sky and wood and field,
For my heart's comfort, I implore,
A generous largess yield!

For in the pathway of your train
I may not follow. Here must I
Watch Autumn heap her harvest wain,
And Winter triumph by.

Yours are the gifts for which I long;
Yours the delights for which I yearn;—
Fair days that seem one thread of song,
Sunsets that pulse and burn;

Flowers, and the attar of their breath,
From the first rose's opening lips
Until the last wan aster's death,
Frosted into eclipse;

The south-wind's touch; the whisperings
Of pines,—their old mysterious rune;
And all the strange elusive things
That chance beneath the moon;

Grant me from each of these to take
Some essence fruitful to my mood;
I know that e'en in marsh and brake
There is beatitude!

I know what wealth of wonder works
In weft of weed and gossamer;
And the keen potency that lurks
In humble cone and burr!

O opulent, bestow on me
A faith, without or doubt or fear,
To face the winter's poverty,—
The famine of the year!

A COTTAGE IN MATSUSHIMA

By Onoto Watanna

Author of "The Wooing of Wistaria," "A Japanese Nightingale," Etc.

IT was blue dawn in Matsushima and the yellow gleams of the rising sun were already touching the slumberous waters.

Overhead a little restless wind awakened languorously and swept across the bay, moving to a gentle ripple its glassy surface.

Drowsy nature stirred lazily into life. There was movement in the trees, in the grass, in the very air. The birds stretched their wings and shook them, then, twittering softly, fell to the earth in search of breakfast. A little white fox came stealthily down to the shore from the cloudy hills above, then fled of a sudden, frightened by the chattering of a mischievous monkey.

On one side of the bay the land sloped up from the shore into symmetrical green hills. Beyond these hills there were valleys and slender rivers. Farther away still, gigantic mountains arose to a height, seeming from their distance like huge white clouds, spectral and transparent.

On the opposite shore, although distant two and a half miles, Mount Tomi seemed to bend his noble head forward, as if to peer at his reflected shadow in the bay. On the east was the Pacific and on the west the road to Sendai.

The stillness and silence of the early morning were broken by the distant patter patter of the sandaled feet of *jinrikisha* runners.

There were two vehicles, and both were occupied by women. The elder one, evidently the mother, was sleeping uncomfortably in the carriage, her head bobbing and swaying from side to side with the jolting of the *jinrikisha*. The

younger one was awake, though her eyes were heavy from lack of sleep. As a matter of fact, they had spent the night in an uncomfortable train, which contained no sleeping accommodations whatever. They had reached Sendai at the hour of three in the morning. The station was worse than the train. Somehow they had managed to arouse a couple of runners, and undeterred by the early hour, proceeded on to their destination, a little village a few miles from Matsushima Bay.

The journey in the dawn had been shivery and weird, like some clammy, cloudy dream, the girl had thought, but as they swung into the sudden light of the bay, glowing from the first kiss of the sun, life assumed a brighter aspect. An ejaculation escaped the lips of the young woman.

"Oh, it is beautiful! beautiful!" Then to the runner: "Stop! Stop a bit, please."

Still running he called back:

"Good luck! Honorable sun arisen.

We arrive soon. Heu-u-u-u——!"

"But wait a minute! Do you hear me?" she called. "I want to get out a moment."

He pulled up abruptly and looked back at her sulkily. The other *jinrikisha* sped on, leaving them behind on the shore of the bay. The young woman stepped down from the *jinrikisha*, and drew in great breath of the sweet, fresh air. Then with both hands shading her eyes she watched the slowly tinging sky, as one might look upon a picture. She pointed across the bay.

"Over there is what?"

"Mountain," said the runner, briefly.

"Oh! Mount Tomi, is it not?"

His voice was complaining.

"Honorable miss hired me to bring her to the village. This waiting was not part of the bargain."

She could not understand his muttering English.

"What are those flat, white spaces on the hills?"

"Rocks. Tombs."

"Oh, and who——"

She broke off, startled by the venomous expression of the runner. He had approached her closer, and now held out a heavy hand. The knuckles were hard and gnarled, and she became somewhat pale.

"You pay me!" said the man in an unnaturally hoarse voice.

"Pay you!" she faltered. "Why, of course. I—I intended to."

"You make me wait," he snarled. "I lose customers, one, two, mebbe ten. No get back to Sendai before tree hour. You pay me! I go no further."

"You want me to pay in advance?" she asked.

"*Hoom!*" he grunted.

She put her hand to the little leather bag at her waist; but did not open it. Her horrified eyes were fixed upon the greedy ones watching the trembling hand on the purse. The runner's expression was involved. In it she read the sudden intention of the thief.

She threw one quick, startled glance about her. She had often laughed at gawsome tales of the deeds of these unprincipled wretches. With her strong, athletic, young womanhood, she could not imagine how men so small could attack one of a race so much larger in size. But now she looked fearfully at the thick, heavy hands, the muscular shoulders and limbs, and she knew here was a strength with which size had nothing to do.

All the money she possessed in the world lay in that little bag at her waist. She had intended to deposit it in some Sendai bank. It had been too early when they arrived.

Becoming conscious of the fact that the man was approaching her stealthily by inches, she began to tremble vio-

lently. Then something heavy and huge fell upon her hand on the bag, and she felt the clutch of terrible fingers, with nails as long and sharp as the claws of a cat. Desperately, wildly, she struggled a moment. She felt the straining at her waist, the breaking away of the little bag, then a crash and the ringing clink of coin falling upon pebble stones. As the bag fell to the ground the gold flew out, scattering and rolling. There were no bills, for she had foolishly changed her money into coin in Tokio.

As in a nightmare, like one paralyzed and unable to help herself, she saw that horrible form scrambling. She clutched her throat with her two bruised hands. Then a piercing cry burst from her lips and rang out through the silence, finding a terrifying echo in the hills. After that she heard dim sounds, the crashing apart of bushes, the sounds of running feet, and then she fell forward on her face, covering a remnant of the money.

The runner hastily thrust what money he had been able to seize into the bosom of his robe, then without pausing to look in the direction of the hill, down which he heard and felt the rush of hastening feet, he turned about and sped like the wind along the highway which led back to Sendai.

A moment later a young Japanese sprang upon the beach and paused in irresolute horror by the side of the unconscious girl. His first impulse was to pursue and punish the thief, but something in the helpless, limp attitude of the girl caused him to hasten to her at once. She had fallen face downward, her arms spread out as though she unconsciously had sought to seize and protect something beneath her. Her hands were badly bruised, one of them bleeding and scratched. They were thin, artistic hands, singularly white and expressive, the fingers long and tapering.

The young man gently lifted the girl upward and turned her about on her back. He paused a moment to look at the white face which even in insensibility bore the expression of blind, helpless fear and horror. The features were delicate, the nose and mouth sensitive,

the brow fine and broad. She had a mass of dull brown hair, and strands of it had become loosened about her face by the shock of the fall.

Hastening to the edge of the bay, the young man made a cup out of his two hands, which he filled with water. Then returning to the girl, he dashed the water sharply upon her face, then placed his cold, wet hands on her brow, pressing the temples firmly.

After a moment she stirred, and struggled toward consciousness. Her lips parted. She opened a pair of large gray eyes, and stared up dazedly at the face bending above her. Her hand wandered feebly to her brow, then fell to her side, the mere lifting of it causing her pain. She remembered everything, and nausea swept across her.

Then she was aware of a gentle, low voice above her, a voice speaking in English, yet with a slight accent.

"The lady has met with violence. It is a great pity and misfortune, but the guilty one shall be surely apprehended and punished. Have no further fear."

She raised herself up weakly to a sitting posture, and spoke faintly.

"It won't help matters for me," she said, hopelessly, "for the money is all gone. I don't know what we shall do."

"There is a little left," he said, hesitatingly. She caught her breath hysterically as he stooped and slowly picked up a number of pieces. He did not hand them to her, however, but placed them in his own sleeve, "for safety" he told her, smiling gravely.

She stared out miserably before her.

"The wretch also forgot his *jin-rikisha*," he said. "It is property, and worth somewhat."

She looked at the vehicle in dull thought.

"Are you strong enough—that is, do you think it would be asking too much to—assist me into—it?"

"Strong enough!" He blushed boyishly. Then he arose from his kneeling posture beside her, and she saw he was quite tall, and she smiled faintly at the wounded pride reflected in his face. She took his extended hand simply, and permitted him to help her into the *jin-*

rikisha. She was surprised to see him go forward toward the shafts. Pausing between them he looked back at her.

"Where am I to take you?" he asked, simply.

Her head had fallen languidly against the back of the carriage. She lifted it slowly, while she pressed her slim, bruised hands together.

"We had rented a little cottage," she said, "but——"

"It is—where?"

"On the estate of the Marquis Date. We rented a little cottage they called Plum Blossom." Her voice arose piteously. "But we can't take it now. We can't take it now."

She wrung her hands in anguish.

"And why not?" he asked, quietly.

"Because we have not the money."

"But the rent is very small."

"Yes. It was why we came here.

We are so poor, and we could not afford to live in the open ports, and our little income comes from a small Japanese legacy. We thought we could live here cheaply, and I could work at the same time. I—I am supposed to be an artist." She laughed drearily. "But now," she said, "we can't even afford the fifteen yen a month. We'll have to get back to Tokio somehow, and maybe I can get work more practical there."

"But the rent of the Plum Blossom cottage is only five yen," he said, slowly.

"Why, no, for the agent in Tokio told us——"

"Fifteen yen is a mere figure to name to foreigners. The Marquis Date will not charge the stranger more than the native. Rent is very cheap in Japan."

"Only five yen," she repeated, red fever spots appearing in her cheeks. "How much—how much did that—that man leave me?"

"I will see."

She noticed half absently that after he had counted the money he had taken from one sleeve he dipped into the other. Coming to her side he laid the money in her lap. Her eyes widened as she counted. She raised a blank face to his.

"But," she said, "he—he has not taken any, then."

"No?" Her companion's face was coldly impassive.

"There might be a few sen gone, or even a yen or two, but scarcely anything. Oh, this is indeed unexpected."

He lifted the shafts.

"Shall we start now," he asked, smiling a trifle at the new light in her face.

"No, wait a minute. I have a few questions to ask you."

He bowed slightly.

"You are a resident here, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"And you really know that five yen only is the rent of this cottage?"

"Yes—five yen."

"How fortunate we are. Is it near to the Date palace?"

"Not very far."

"We have heard so much of this Marquis Date. He is a very great and powerful man in Japan, is he not?"

The young man smiled.

"He is very rich," he said.

"And of a very old family—the most interesting of families we were told."

"Yes?"

"Christians, aren't they?"

"So?"

"And philanthropists?"

"Sometimes."

"My head is throbbing. I think I fainted more from fright than anything else. I was fatigued, too, from lack of sleep; but you see, in spite of everything, how interested I am in my future home."

"Yes."

"I know you are a gentleman, and I feel ashamed to allow you to—pull me to this cottage."

"It will be a pleasure," he said, very seriously, and lifted the shafts preparatory to starting.

"If you do not lean back against the seat," he advised her, "you will not feel so much the jolting."

"Thank you, very much," she returned, gratefully, and he started forward.

Miss Perry Nelson stood with head poised critically on one side, her eyes

half closed. The hand holding her paint brush was on her hip, the other held her chin, after a fashion she had when she paused to study her work. She turned about suddenly toward the little woman sewing comfortably beneath a plum tree.

"I tell you what it is, mamma," she said, "the scenery is *too* beautiful. It—I just can't rise to it."

The mother looked up mildly.

"I think you have done beautifully," she said.

"No—there's something lacking about my work. I don't know what."

She threw herself down on the grass and rested her head against her mother's knee. Her flushed face was uplifted, as though she enjoyed feeling the moving breeze upon it. The mother fondled the girl's head lovingly, softly smoothing back the little rebel curls which blew about in the breeze.

"Well, if my opinion——" she began.

"Your opinion is not worth a pinch of snuff," said the girl, promptly. She knew by the feel of the hand on her brow that the mother was hurt and stirred.

"You," she said, softly, "are the dearest mother in the world—but it's just because you are—just mother, that you couldn't be an unbiased critic of my work. You just can't see my faults."

"But, indeed, there are none, I'm sure—in your painting," replied the mother, with such pardonable assurance. "Now Prof. Loeb himself told me——"

"Yes, I know all about it. And not even Prof. Loeb would have the heart to tell you otherwise. Why, even Gonji praises my stuff *before* you, but when your back's turned—whew!"

"Why, Perry, you don't mean to tell me that Mr. Gonji would deceive me like that."

"Of course he would."

Mrs. Nelson looked only a trifle concerned as she folded her work accurately, and then smoothed it.

"Well, then, I am really disappointed in him," she said.

"Nonsense. He is really a dandy critic, mother, and anything horrid he has to say about my work is always, al-

ways true. If I were a wise person, I ought to profit by it, too. He's better than a hundred teachers hemming and humming over my defects, because he, Gonji, always points out the remedy."

Mrs. Nelson seemed to be thinking about something else. Her hand went back to the girl's head, and she bent over her.

"Perry, Mr. Gonji comes to see you a great deal," she said, suddenly.

"Yes, indeed, he does. We couldn't get on without him, could we, mamma?"

"Do you think *he* will be able to get on without us—you—after a time, Perry?"

"Without me?" said the girl, sitting up, and blinking. "Without me? I never thought of that. Oh, yes, I suppose he will."

"But suppose—he—well—thought he couldn't. Suppose, Perry, Mr. Gonji were in love with you?"

"With me! Mamma!"

She swung around and looked up with wide, amazed eyes at her mother.

"With me!" she repeated. "Why, what would he be in love with *me* for?"

"And why not?"

"Why? Because nobody ever gets in love with me. The idea! I'm a natural born spins—bachelor girl. Besides, he's a Japanese. The whole thing's a joke, mother."

Mrs. Nelson sighed.

"Well, dear, I'm very much afraid that the poor boy really does care for you?"

"Absurd! He's Japanese—Japanese, and me—I—I'm an American woman."

"Well," said the older and wiser lady, stubbornly, "it's my opinion that the Lord put the same kind of hearts in the Japanese as he did in the Americans."

She arose and shook the pieces of lint and thread from her skirt.

"What would you like for lunch?" she asked, irrelevantly.

"Wait a minute." Perry had arisen also, and was standing in her path. "You don't really mean what you've been saying, mother, about Gonji?"

Mrs. Nelson looked at her daughter's face, then hesitated.

"I may have been mistaken," she said. "But—"

"That 'but' speaks volumes," said the girl, solemnly. "You actually and really mean it, I see. Well! I'm going to sit here a while and cogitate upon it."

"He's a real nice boy," said the mother, "and quite handsome in his way, too. He's splendidly educated, too. He told me he had been to an American college."

"Yes—Hamilton College."

"And his people, I'm sure, must be very fine indeed. He seems to be connected in some way with the Date family, for he's always at their place, and you know how very, very exclusive they are. Their agent treats him with so much deference."

She sighed, and again hesitated, looking at her daughter somewhat wistfully.

"Oh, Perry," she said, "what a God-send it would be if some rich man would—"

"Marry me!" added the girl, derisively. "Mamma, in our wildest dreams we never thought of that, did we? Who ever dreamed of me—my person—being of market value. Ha, ha! Heu!"

Her mother regarded her, sadly.

"And why not?" she asked, stubbornly. "You are as attractive as other girls, and a million times cleverer."

"I'm not the sort, that's why," the girl snapped, with a trace of ill humor; "and what's more, Gonji—this little Jap—isn't the sort either. There, run along, matchmaker."

Mrs. Nelson turned toward the house, then paused after a few steps.

"Mr. Gonji is coming up the heights now," she said, quietly. "Shall we keep him for lunch?"

"Well, leave us alone a moment, will you?"

"Of course."

Perry sat down on a moss-grown stone, and clasping her hands about her knees, she stared out before her reflectively.

"I've half a mind," she said, speaking softly to herself, "to ask him point-

blank about it. It's different with him, of course. It's not as if he were an ordinary ma—American."

A few moments later she had arisen to return the low bow of her Japanese lover. She had not known that he was her lover, but he had never for a moment considered himself otherwise.

"Mr. Gonji," she said, with her eyes full upon his face, "you know I'm a perfectly frank and open girl, and I'm not accustomed to keep things to myself."

He appeared puzzled at her words, but smiled slightly.

"Now, mother says you're in love—in love, you understand—with me, and I want to ask you—are you?"

He flushed to the roots of his hair. His dark, poetic eyes enlarged and fairly shone. But he simply bowed his head, dumbly. She went a step nearer to him, and watched his face curiously.

"Answer me, please. Is it true?"

"Yes, it is true," he said, simply.

She started and caught her breath. When she spoke, her words came slowly, almost forcedly.

"You know—it is all very impossible. You are Japanese and I American. We belong to—to almost antagonistic races."

"Love knows no race," he said, softly, and turned his eyes from her face to look out dreamily at the bay.

"Nobody," she said, "ever made love to me before—that is, nobody ever told me he cared for me before. I am not a man's woman exactly. At college—I am a Wellesley girl, you know—I was one of the few girls who didn't have—well, admirers, sweethearts, beaux."

He did not interrupt her, and she continued somewhat breathlessly.

"Not that I was disliked, but I just simply didn't attract men. I was rather—clever, yes, I really was—considered so. Then, I'm not a beauty."

He turned and looked at her fully.

"To me you are the most beautiful being on earth. I thought so that first time I gazed upon you when you were unconscious and helpless. I have thought so ever since, dear lady."

She blushed girlishly, and did really look very pretty.

"Well, but other people don't think so. Maybe, though, I never had much of a chance to show off what little—looks—I might have. But, anyhow, I always was thought a plain, little body at home, you know."

"But you have soul."

"No-o," dubiously. "At least, I'm not so sure about that. Then, you know, I'm not very young. Maybe I'm older than you are."

"I am twenty-eight," he said.

"And I am twenty-eight, too," she said, smiling.

"That is good."

Her eyes were troubled.

"Mr. Gonji," she said, "you won't let this make any difference in our friendship, will you?"

He looked at her pleadingly.

"If you will only permit our friendship to continue," he said.

"Oh, I shall be glad, glad," she said, quickly.

"And I will never bother you or speak to you again about my love for you," he said, slowly, "but I will continue to adore you in silence. You will permit that, will you not?"

"Why, I—I couldn't very well prevent it, could I?" she answered, and wondered angrily why her voice trembled.

He moved to her work on the easel, and looked at it from different distances, his arms crossed over his breast.

"It's atrocious, isn't it?" she asked, forgetting everything now in her anxiety for his opinion.

"It is too exact," he said. "It is too, too western in tone. You must not copy nature's colors so realistically. Now, a Japanese artist would convey in a few brushes an impression rather—an ideal picture of such a landscape. You have made a photograph. The color is too heavy upon your cherry blossoms—see, from a distance how flaky, how cloudy even they really appear. Nature herself wraps about them a soft, gauzy veil which only the Japanese artist seems to see. There is mystery, illusion in such a picture."

She turned the canvas with its face to the easel.

"There, don't look at it. Some day maybe I will be able to see with the eye of a Jap—" She broke off abruptly, and colored warmly. "Come, I hear the lunch bell tinkling. You are the apple of mamma's eye, and she's bound to have something good for you."

He detained her a moment.

"I want you to go with me somewhere to-morrow," he said, in a low voice.

"Where?"

"Across the bay. I want to show you—something."

"Oh, all right. To-morrow, then."

The following day they crossed in a little *sampan* to the opposite side of the bay. Perry had never been across before. Her own side had kept her sufficiently occupied in exploration, for here were a thousand places of historical interest.

The opposite shore had always appeared to her vague and distant, an unexplored, unattainable, mountainous, forest region. She was surprised to find excellent roads leading up from the shore to the hills and mountain above. It pleased her, too, that Gonji had thoughtfully arranged for *jirikishas* to meet them, and so the journey upward was quite delightful, with two stout runners to pull each vehicle.

They wound in and out of paths about the mountain, along through a wooded path by the side of a beautiful brook, and then suddenly they came to an iron and stone-arched gate. Passing through this, they entered what appeared to be an exquisitely-cultivated park. On either side of the long, winding path immensely tall bamboos arose to a great height, meeting at the top.

Perry decided that they had arrived at the private estate of some wealthy Japanese, and she was pleased and deeply interested. Leaning forward, she looked about her curiously.

Suddenly a strange sight burst upon her view. The path ran around a green, closely-cut lawn, in the center of which was a marble fountain, and facing this lawn was a large, stone house, plainly of English architecture and

build. The girl regarded it in amazement.

The runners pulled up abruptly before the front of the house. Gonji jumped down swiftly from his *jirikisha* and, hastening to the girl, assisted her to alight. He was very grave and pale, and for some reason Perry became tongue-tied, and found herself unable to question him.

Almost dazed, she allowed him to lead her into the house. They passed through the wide, cool hall, with its heavy English furnishings, and the dark paintings upon the wall seeming almost weird in the yellow light that flowed in through the opened door.

Still leading her, though he barely touched her arm, they came to the dining-room, and she saw the table was set for two. She dropped into a chair, and he deliberately sat opposite her.

"Whose house is this?" she asked, in a strained voice.

"Mine," he said.

"How long," she said, "have you— you owned this—house?"

"It is eight years old. I ordered it built the year I entered the American college. It was built by Americans for me."

She gasped, and stared at him in bewilderment.

"But you don't actually live here?"

"No."

"Then *why* did you build it?"

"Listen. Eight years ago I made up my mind that some day I would marry an American girl. I built this house for her."

"Oh!"

"I have been waiting," he said, "eight years. Think of it."

She caught her breath.

"But why did you wait?"

"I had not met the one. Don't mistake me. It was not merely an American girl I wanted. I am not foolishly enamored of your race. I simply knew that some day I *would* love a girl who would be American."

"And you built this house in anticipation?"

"Yes."

"But how could you think that even

if you cared for her, she would reciprocate your affection?"

"I did not think it," he said.

"Then was it not a perfectly useless undertaking?" she asked, in an almost despairing voice.

"No. One has a little imagination, Miss Perry. I thought this way. I will erect this house for the woman I will love. If she will not accept me for her husband, I shall at least have this monument for her. So, when the other day you told me my love for you was an impossible thing, I wanted to bring you here for once—just once, Miss Perry. When you are gone, I shall think of you just as you are now—sitting in the house I built for you. I shall wander through the rooms and imagine you are with me—married to me, and sometimes when I close my eyes, I will feel your presence and see your face."

She arose from her seat with a little stifled cry.

"I'm so *real*, Mr. Gonji," she said. "You mustn't, mustn't make a spirit—a ghost of me." She actually shivered.

He smiled, faintly.

"And," she continued, falteringly, "I don't like your house at all. It is oppressive, ghostly. I love the beautiful little Japanese houses infinitely better. I would rather live in one of them. It is lonesome and chilly here, and if you don't—don't take me home I shall become hysterical."

He sprang to his feet, remorse depicted in all his lineaments. He hastened to her side.

"Oh, Miss Perry, I am a fool-brute."

"Don't call yourself names. I don't know what's the matter with me. I feel choking, that's all."

"Let us go out. The sun is everywhere. It is better company than the shadow of such a house."

On the veranda he paused irresolutely by the door, then suddenly turned and inserted a key in the lock.

"I have closed it," he said to her, simply.

Her eyes were full of tears.

"And promise me, please do, Mr. Gonji, that you will not come here—when I am gone."

"It was my fancy," he said, sadly.

"You live with your people now, don't you?" she questioned, timidly.

"You have brothers and sisters?"

"I am an only child."

"But your parents——?"

"I have a mother, the Lady Date."

"You—are—a Date?" she said, slowly.

He bowed his head.

"The last Marquis of Date," he said, somberly.

She stood perfectly still, and stared at him. Strange thoughts rushed through her mind. The Marquis Date was their landlord, that strange, wonderfully-kind landlord whom they had never seen. This, then, was the secret of the strange drop in the rent of the cottage as first quoted by the Tokio agent. This, then, was the reason for the service of a dozen coolies sent by courtesy of the Marquis Date to lay out and till for them the land which went with the house. He, this simple Mr. Gonji, who had drawn her like a common *jinrikisha* runner to her new home that first day, was that landlord whom they had fallen into the habit of blessing, because of his many favors.

She looked out vaguely at the opposite shore, and she could see from where she stood the white tombs of the great Date family shining out spectrally in the yellow light.

"It is the most wonderful family in Japan," she said, hardly aware that she was speaking.

"I will take you home now, Miss Perry, if you will allow me," he interrupted her troubled thoughts, gently.

Her eyes were bright with tears. She had never realized how sentimental she could feel. She spoke softly, with her wet face upraised.

"I think you are the noblest, grandest man I ever met. I can't—can't imagine any position higher, better, than that of your wife—if you still do really want me."

He took her hands softly in his own. His eyes widened as they searched her face eagerly, uncertainly. Then suddenly he slipped to his knees and put his face passionately against her hands.

AN INDIAN SUMMER LOVE STORY

By Eugene Wood

"WELL now, if I was you, S'repty, I wouldn't bother my head about it one second," declared Mrs. Parker. "It's all right. He's a very nice man, this Mr. Frizzell——"

"Frazee," corrected Sarepta.

"Frazee, then. I'm the poorest hand for names. I jist *can't* keep 'em in my head. Very nice and quiet. I put him at that little table over there in the corner by the window and you don't hardly hear a word out of him. At first I thought him and me wasn't goin' to get along at all. He couldn't drink this here ten-cent coffee that comes already browned. Went all around town lookin' for *good* coffee. Otho Littell was tellin' me how he showed Mr. Fuzee——"

"Frazee."

"Frazee. I know. Ain't it ridiculous I can't remember it? The very best they was in town Otho showed him and he jist run his hands through it and smelled of it and says: 'Huh!' jist like that, and turned on his heel and walked out. 'Well,' I says to myself, 'if *that's* the way——' And then he sent off and got a bag o' some kind o' coffee—he told me the name of it, too—ker-boom or ker-slam—I don't know. Anyhow he wanted me to brown it for him. 'Well now,' I says to myself, 'my days o' brownin' coffee in a pan in the oven is past and gone too long ago to talk about.' But he was so nice and said he'd pay me for my trouble that I jist couldn't say no to him. It's awful

nice-flavored, the way he has me make it for him, but la me! if I was to drink it as strong as Mr. Fraser drinks it——"

"Frazee."

"As Mr. Frazee drinks it—I jist can *not* keep names in my head—why, I couldn't sleep a wink. Why, it's as black as tar. Yes, sir. I don't believe it's good for the health to drink it as strong as all that."

"But don't you think——"

"But that's the only thing, and as far as your givin' yourself one minute's uneasiness for fear folks'll talk about you because you got this Mr. What-you-may-call-'im for a roomer and you all by yourself, why I wouldn't *think* of it. Why, do you s'pose if I thought they was anything wrong about it, I'd ha' sent him over to your house to get a room when I was all full up? Why, no. And wasn't it providential now that he come along jist when he did, and you worried out o' your life and soul with that old Jerusalem cricket, Sister—Sister-rah—— Oh, what's her name now?"

"Sister Pennypiece."

"I do' know what ever possessed you to go and invite her to stay with you a few days after camp-meetin' when you might 'a' knowed she was jist one o' them dead-beats and lookin' for somebody that she could sponge off of and stay the whole fall and winter. And thinks I: 'There's a good chance o' helpin' her out and me, too,' so I says to this Mr. —, I says to him: 'You can

get a room, like enough, at S'repty Downey's, I says, and he looked at me so funny. And he went right over and you rented the room to him. I thought that was too killin'. I bet she jist raved and caved when she come back and found out."

"Well no. *She* didn't, but Aunt Betty Mooney that was with her——"

"There's a pair of 'em for you."

"Aunt Betty about raised the roof. She talked awful to me. Said it was easy to see what I was up to."

"She didn't!"

"Oh, yes, she did. She told me I was one of them that thinks it ain't ever too late to get a beau——"

"Oh, good land! You!"

"I felt awful, and if he hadn't paid me in advance I don't know but I'd have——"

"Now, don't you go and be foolish. Why, my grief! Here you've lived here all your life till you're gray-headed and not a word against you in any shape, manner or form and people thinks the world and all of you. Don't you s'pose folks has got *some* sense?"

"Yes, but you know what Aunt Betty and Sister Pennypiece are to talk."

"And don't everybody know that? And this Mr. Fuzell——"

"Mr. Frazee."

"Yes. He's an old man, too, ain't he?"

"Well, I don't know as you'd call him old."

"He's about your age, ain't he?"

"Yes, I suppose so, but you don't think I'm old, do you?"

"Well, you're no spring chicken, S'repty; but I will say that for a woman o' your age, you're mighty trim and well-preserved. It's a pity you ever got that notion into your head about bein' engaged to Sam Coulter. You might 'a' got married a dozen times over and not be left alone the way you was when your pa died. I expect that was more'n half the reason you had that old Jerusalem cricket come up and stay with you, bein' so lonesome. I blame your pa for breakin' it off with Sam in the first place."

"No, now that was my fault. I

oughtn't to have quarreled with him about Sallie Mumma. Then he wouldn't have enlisted."

"Well, we won't talk about that now. Anybody that knows how you could have had your pick o' the men when you was young ain't goin' to believe you're after 'em now. He don't bother you none, does he? Comin' in and settin', I mean."

"Who? Mr. Frazee?"

"Um."

"Oh, no. Not at all."

"Well then, why should you fret?"

"I don't know as I do fret. But here lately every Wednesday evening when I come out of prayer-meeting, he's waiting to see me home. He said it didn't look right to him to see a lady alone on the street at night and——"

"Um," assented Mrs. Parker. "I say so, too."

"And if I didn't have any other company and didn't object he had just as lives come by for me as not. I told him I was used to it. Pa never would go with me, you know. But he said it wasn't any bother and he would unless I objected, and I couldn't very well say I objected, but——"

"But what?"

"Well, I didn't want people to think he was going with me."

"And wouldn't it be terrible if they did! Wouldn't it be just terrible! Now look here, S'repty, if you want to know, I think it's all foolishness for you to think you dassen't look at a man just because Sam Coulter never come back from the war. I'd put on mournin' for him and be done with it and not punish myself the way you do."

Sarepta shook her head.

"If people should say that I was going with Mr. Frazee I'd have to tell him to go. I couldn't stand it. I'd hate awful to tell him to go, but that's just what I'd have to do if—people said that."

"Now don't you worry. They won't nobody talk about you unless it is old Aunt Betty and the Jerusalem cricket, and if they do, why people won't pay one bit of attention. They'll jist consider the source."

And this was exactly what people did.

The romantic story of Sarepta Downey was one of the traditions of Minuca Center. The little old maid with the glow in her cheeks, like the Indian summer of a girl's blush, would have been dear to all because of her devotion to the memory of her old sweetheart even if she hadn't been the good soul she was.

Old Aaron Downey was a quarrelsome old man. In war time he was a Vallandigham Democrat, as much to be contrary as anything, and when Sarepta became engaged to Sam Coulter, the boy old Adam Coulter took to raise, who lived out on the Pharisburg road next to Mumma's and was a black Abolitionist, he fairly pawed up the ground. Old man Coulter didn't like it either. He wanted Sam to have Sallie Mumma, and when Sam, to please him, took Sallie to a couple of places, old Aaron taunted Sarepta so that in a passion of jealousy she quarreled with Sam. She had no idea he would take it to heart, but he did, and the next thing was, he had enlisted and gone to Camp Chase.

Pa Downey strictly forbade her to write the scratch of a pen to any "Lincoln hireling," and if Sam ever wrote to her she never got the letter. Nobody would have put it past Aaron Downey to have kept the letters from her, but if Sarepta thought so she never accused her father of it. She blamed herself for it all. She knew Sam liked her and was engaged to her, as witness the little set ring he had given her, which she had worn to paper thinness. She knew he didn't care for Sallie Mumma. When he came back she was going to take all the blame on herself. But he didn't come back. She had not even the melancholy satisfaction of knowing that he was dead. Among her scanty treasures, an old daguerreotype of Sam in a square case lined with red velvet, a dried flower he had picked for her and a basket he had whittled out of a peach-stone, there was a frayed and yellowed clipping from the *Weekly Examiner* giving the list of casualties

among the Logan County boys in one of the skirmishes before Richmond. One item was: "Private Samuel Coulter, missing." That was all. The rest was silence.

But though Sam never came back, she still considered herself engaged to him. Fellows would start in to keep company with her, well-off fellows, too, but she gave them to understand that she considered herself engaged to Sam Coulter, and after a while they would stop going with her.

"You act like a fool, S'repty," her father would snarl at her, "a regular, cussed fool. Who was he, anyhow, to make so much fuss about? Old Ad. Coulter's bound boy. Lord knows what kind o' low trash he come from."

But with the obstinacy of the timid she held her course. It was no more than right that she should do as she did after the way she had treated Sam. Almost the last thing her father had said to her was that she had been a "cussed fool" to stay single when she had so many chances to marry and do well. He was going to die and she'd be all alone in the world, and whose fault was it? Why, hers, because she had been such a "cussed fool."

But she tended him lovingly and mourned him sincerely and even missed him when he was gone. Even his rasping voice was good to hear. It was the voice of a man, and man is the fountain of authority. Though he was old and feeble, she did not know what it was to be afraid when she padlocked the cellar door at night and shut the shutters and locked up the house.

This Sister Pennypiece that had fastened herself on Sarepta at the Urbana camp-meeting and had proved such a bore that she was glad to get her out, was almost worse than nobody at all. For she used to sit and tell the most awful tales of people living alone and being found in the morning with their throats cut, and then she would grab Sarepta and whisper: "Sh! Did you hear that?" After a long and breathless pause she would whisper: "It sounded like somebody walkin' around upstairs."

Since this Mr. Frazee had come to

take Sister Pennypiece's room she had not felt afraid at all. If burglars got in there was a man in the house, somebody that could attend to their case. But if people were going to talk about it, she would have to tell him to go.

Now there is no denying that Aunt Betty Mooney did go around town declaring that it was scandalous, simply scandalous, for Sarepta Downey, a member of Center Street M. E., to be living alone in the house with a man and that man beaung her around. It ought to be brought up before the officary and she ought to be rebuked. And that man Frazee, public opinion ought to attend to him. Who was he, anyhow? Where'd he come from? What was he after? Why didn't he go to work or do something, like he'd ought to? Wasn't there anybody had spunk enough to up and ask him?

"I jox, I d'know, Aunt Betty," said Otho Littell. "Seems not. Why don't you?"

"Yes, and have him tell me to go 'long about my business. I see myself talkin' to that man. The looks of him is enough for me."

"Aw, now, Aunt Betty, he's a very nice lookin' man, with that big beard o' his, tall and not too fleshy, and straight as a candle. 'Tain't often you see a man like that when's he's gittin' gray."

"Struttin' along the street, as if he owned it, and puffin' his filthy tobacco smoke in people's faces. Well, mebbly not right in their faces, but poisonin' the very air they breathe. Nobody can be a pure man and use tobacco. Now that's so, Brother Littell. You know what the Scripture says about layin' aside 'all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness. Tobacco wasn't invented in them days, I know, but if that ain't it to a t-y, ty, then I don't want a cent and you needn't think I don't see you tryin' to hide that there quid o' tobacco in your cheek, Brother Littell, because I do, and the Lord sees it too, and, come Judgment day, you'll hear from Him, now, sure's you're a foot high."

"All right, Aunt Betty. Now what else was it you wanted to-day? Tea,

sugar, coffee, canned peaches—we got some nice canned corn."

"Well, you might send me up a can o' corn and about three pounds o' sugar and a quarter of a pound o' tea, and if the officary don't do nothin' about S'repty and that man Frazee— How would you like some dried beef, Sister Pennypiece? About half a pound, Otho. Thin, now. Jist as thin as you can— Why, then, the citizens had ought to take 'em in hand."

Sister Pennypiece apparently tried to check the fury of Aunt Betty's accusations, but it was as Clarence Bowersox, Mr. Littell's clerk, said after the two had gone out: "And all the time, *all the time*, mind you, a-gittin' in her mean little insinuedos."

"Oh, she's got it in for S'repty, no two ways about that," said Mr. Littell. "I jox! It ain't no snap to live at Aunt Betty's, even if you do gitch board for nothin'. She had it easy at S'repty's. They tell me she wouldn't even make her own bed. I bet old Aunt Betty makes her stand around. I jox!"

Part of Aunt Betty's animosity to Frazee was due to the fact that nobody had found out much about him, and she resented it. People that were so still about themselves must be up to some devilment or other. But while Minuca Center was as curious as she, there was something about Frazee that forbade catechizing. From his ordering Coban coffee; from his getting letters with a long-tailed bird on the postage stamps, and from his talking Spanish with old man Sanchez, the cigarmaker, they inferred that he must have lived in Mexico or South America or some such place.

Sarepta was finding out more about him than anybody, but so fearful was she that folks would think she was going with him that she never mentioned his name, but kept all these things in her heart.

Coming home from prayer-meeting began to be an event she looked forward to all week. She had always liked geography, and it was most interesting to talk with Mr. Frazee, who had lived where they had palm trees and bananas

and vanilla and all that. He had a coffee plantation in San Rafael, province of Coban, Guatemala, and he told her all about raising coffee; how they had to be so careful of the young plants and shade them with bananas; how the coffee berry was something like a cherry, only instead of having a pit it had these two seeds. He told her about the people down there and how the young fellows courted the girls and never got a chance to speak to them. He told her about bull-fights and all such, but most interesting of all, he told her how he had come to go there right after the War of the Rebellion, when he was just a boy, as you might say, and with all a boy's love of the adventurous life whetted, not satiated, with the few months' soldiering he had had; how sick he was of it in a little while, and how he wanted to go back home, only he couldn't, because he didn't have the money, and then when he did get the money, how he had become a little better used to it and, finding a good opportunity for investment, he had started in to raise coffee. He had done pretty well, he didn't say how well, but pretty well. And then a man came along and offered him his price, or near about, and he felt a great longing to get back to God's country. Sometimes he thought he ought never to have left it. He ought to have gone back North after the war was over.

"And why didn't you?"

"Oh, well, all my folks were dead, and there was nobody that cared for me, so I thought."

They walked on and presently Frazee broke out with:

"I'm just about wild to see snow, snow on the ground, snow that you can go sleighing on. I used to dream about snow. First good snowstorm that comes along, do you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to have a sleigh-ride and I'm going to take you with me, that is, if you'll go. Will you?"

"Why, I should be pleased to accept your kind invitation," she answered with old-fashioned politeness.

And then she remembered that she

had not been sleigh-riding since the time she and Sam Coulter had the spat about Sallie Mumma. The more she thought about it the more she felt that she ought not to go. It worried her so that the next day she waylaid Frazee in the hall to tell him so.

"Mr. Frazee," she said, and twisted the little old-fashioned ring on her finger, as she did when nervous, "I don't know as it would be right for me to go sleigh-riding as I told you I would. I thank you for your kind invitation, but——"

"Not right?"

"Well, of course it wouldn't be *wrong* exactly, but—now, I don't want you to think that I've got anything against you, for I haven't. I don't know as there's anybody I like better—of course, you know, I don't mean *in that way*." She blushed to think how clumsily she was doing it.

He seemed to leap at an opportunity.

"And don't you think you could like me *in that way*?" he demanded, bending over her and looking into her eyes. She blushed still deeper and dropped her lids. "Perhaps I go about it all too bluntly, but this is Indian summer with you and me. We have no time to lose in our love-making. Don't you think, from what you have seen of me, that you could 'like me *in that way*' enough"—he swallowed—"enough to marry me?"

She winced and caught her breath with a sob.

"Oh!" she quavered, "I couldn't! I couldn't! It wouldn't be right. I do esteem you. I do l-like you as well as anybody I ever saw, I don't know but better. But it wouldn't be right." Her voice strengthened as she got on familiar ground. "I am engaged to Mr. Sam Coulter."

"Coulter?"

"He was a young man I kept company with, and he went and enlisted in the war, and I am waiting for him to come back."

"Why, my dear, that's forty years ago."

"No. Only thirty-eight. It was in the fall of '64 he enlisted. But that's

no difference. He didn't break the engagement and I mustn't. As long as I don't know he's dead or married to some other girl it wouldn't be right for me to have anybody else, no matter how much I liked him. I expect you think it's kind of foolish in me," she added piteously.

"No, no. Not at all. This man that you speak of——"

"Mr. Coulter?"

"Yes. Hasn't he written to you in all these years?"

"That don't make any difference. I couldn't have anybody else unless he broke the engagement or——died."

"And this is the ring he gave you?" he asked, taking her hand gently.

"Yes," she answered. "It's all worn thin now, but it was a right pretty ring when he gave it to me. I've never taken it off only when I washed my hands, and one time I lost it for pretty near a week and——"

She broke off her prattle in surprise. He raised her hand to his lips and kissed it. It was an unfamiliar caress.

"I have not known such faith," he quoted. "'No, not in Israel.'" Then, after a moment, he said: "But what if he's dead?"

She shook her head.

"If I should prove it to you that he was dead, would that——"

"How could you prove it now?" she asked.

"Yes, that's so. It's a long time ago."

He forbore to press home the point he might have made that she had tacitly confessed that in her heart she knew her lover was long since dead, and that this pretended waiting for him was the fiction with which she concealed even from herself that she was doing penance for a girlish fault, her hasty words spoken a generation ago. She thanked him for it inwardly.

"Yes," she echoed, and drew a long, quivering sigh. "It's a long time ago." And just that tender sadness that we feel whenever we think of days gone by turned the pent-up tide of emotion into the channel of tears. She fled from him into her own rooms. She

could not bear that he should see her cry.

She heard him go out a little later. When she had recovered herself somewhat she determined that she must tell him when he came in again that it wouldn't do for him to stay in the house. She knew that he was honorable and all that, but now that he had become a suitor—why, it wouldn't do, and that was all there was about it. It would be terrible to have to tell him. She might better have had Sister Pen-nypiece stay on. And yet, the verses came into her mind:

"'Twere better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all."

But something in her resented that. You couldn't say that she had "never loved at all" before he came. She had loved Sam Coulter, hadn't she? Yes, and loved him still. And she ought not to say that she loved Mr. Frazee as long as she was engaged to Sam Coulter. But that was a girl's love, a jealous, flaming love, while this was calmer, more placid, more beautiful, as Indian summer is more beautiful than it is in August.

No, no. She must not think of loving him. He ought to look for somebody else, some younger woman. He might just as well as not, he being right in the prime of life, as you might say. She tried to think who would do for him, but it horrified her to find how to think of him as married to another woman was like a knife struck into her heart. If it was going to be like that, Mr. Frazee would certainly have to go. She was engaged to Sam Coulter. She must remember that. And yet, for the first time, she almost regretted that vestal troth of hers.

She did not hear him come in that night. She did not hear him go out in the morning. She waited till a reasonable hour and then, since the matter was so instant, she nerved herself to go up and knock upon his door. There was no response. A cold fear came over her. If he should have died in the night! To be a second time bereaved

of—yes, of a lover. She tried the door. It opened. The bed had not been slept in.

He did not return that day. The house was lonely that night, and she dared not go to a neighbor's or have a neighbor in. It was important that she should speak to him the very first opportunity. It was very lonely. Sarepta quaked at every rattle of the window. Every step she hearkened to and every step passed on. The next day and the next night and still no sign of him. Stepping over to Mrs. Parker's for news, she encountered that lady stepping over to her house for news. Why had not Mr. Frazee come to his meals? Sarepta plainly showed anxiety and more, which Mrs. Parker notified to all and several she knew.

*As Frazee's absence lengthened into a week and then into a fortnight, the whole town, instructed by Mrs. Parker, observed and commented upon Sarepta's appearance, not wholly without amusement, since everybody else's love affair is of necessity comic, and yet not wholly without pity either. Except, of course, with Aunt Betty Mooney and Sister Pennypiece. This latter lady said, in a voice like cold cream, that she hoped this would be a lesson to dear Sister Downey and teach her to set her affections on things above—not on things on the earth.

"I jox!" said Otho Littell. "Whadda you think o' that? Ain't that gall for you!"

But a day came whereon Frazee did return, and Sarepta's joy at seeing him was dashed with bitterness as she thought of what she had to say to him. She stammered out a beginning, but he hushed her with:

"Wait. Wait till to-night. I have invited Mr. and Mrs. Longenecker over and Mr. and Mrs. Lester Pettitt. They're your most intimate friends. I want them to be here. I have a surprise for you."

Sarepta received her pastor and his wife with a nervousness that the commonplaces about the weather did not assuage.

"Mr. Frazee'll be down in a minute,"

she fluttered. "He said for me to entertain you till he came."

"He's been away, I believe," said Mrs. Longenecker, by way of making conversation.

"Yes, he just got back this afternoon."

They rocked in uneasy silence for some minutes. Then Sarepta began:

"Brother Longenecker, I just wish't you'd tell me what I ought to do. Yes, and you, too, Sister Longenecker. You were so good to me when pa died. I've been going to ask you a dozen times, but I couldn't quite spunk up to it."

She was interrupted by the doorbell announcing the Pettitts. During the amenities convention has prescribed, Sarepta and the Longeneckers visibly fidgeted.

"Would you wish to discuss that little matter in private, Sister Downey?" at length inquired the minister.

"No," sighed Sarepta. "Not particularly. I wouldn't want the whole town to know it, but Mr. and Mrs. Pettitt here, they're just like kinfolks to me, and I don't know but more so." It's this way: Mr. Frazee wants me to marry him."

She looked up, expecting to find shocked surprise upon their countenances, but they bore the news with resignation.

"Well?" inquired Brother Longenecker, hardened by his calling to matrimony as butchers are to bloodshed.

"Well, I wanted to know if you thought it would be right for me to have him."

"My dear sister," said the minister, "that's for you to say, not me. He seems to be a very nice man, what I've seen of him, but it's you that must be suited. Do you love him?"

"Well, but that ain't it. I——"

"Well, but I think that is exactly it."

Mrs. Longenecker compressed her lips and solemnly nodded, assenting to her husband's views.

"No, I gave Mr. Coulter my promise I'd marry him, and he hasn't let me off or broke the engagement. They tell me he is dead, but supposing he ain't and

he should ever come back, ain't I bound to wait for him?"

"Supposing it was proved to you that he is dead, do you like Mr. Frazee well enough to marry him?"

"I don't know but I do. Yes, yes, I do know that I do. But my promise to Sam?"

"Then it's the vow that keeps you back. It is a matter of conscience with you, then?"

"Yes, I s'pose it is."

"A vow whose result is for good and not for evil is a vow to be kept, but a vow to punish yourself, and not yourself alone but another, cannot bind because it is—it is——" The minister hesitated.

"Void as against public policy," prompted Lester Pettitt.

"Exactly. Now, if you love Mr. Frazee——"

"I do, I do," burst out Sarepta, "but I can't bear to give up Sam. I've been engaged to him so long. Oh, why did I ever talk so to him? Why did I drive him away?" she cried hysterically. "Oh, Sam! Sam! Come back to me! Tell me whether you're alive or dead!"

"There, there, Sarepta," soothed Mrs. Pettitt. "I wouldn't take on so. I don't know as I ever saw you so excited. You must be calm."

"I'll try," she whimpered, and then suddenly broke out with: "Why can't they come back and tell us? Why can't they? Why can't they?"

The door opened.

Sarepta screamed and stared with bulging eyes. There stood a soldier in the cape overcoat and baggy forage cap of the period of the Civil War. His pale, smooth-shaven visage smiled faintly at her. She staggered to her feet, deathly white. The figure held out its arms.

"Sam!" she cried with a choking gasp, and would have fallen but Mrs. Pettitt caught her.

"Lie right flat down on the floor," she commanded, "that's the best way. It's the most awful sickening feeling

when you're going to faint. Lie right flat down, dear, and you'll soon be over it. My goodness, Mr. Frazee, you scared me, too, for all I knew just what was coming. I never would have known you with your beard off."

"Sam!" whispered Sarepta.

"Yes, Sam," said Frazee, kneeling beside her and taking the hand that wore the little old set ring. "I knew you the minute I saw you, but when you didn't recognize me I thought I'd court you all over again and see if you could love me as myself and not as the memory of your old sweetheart. I have come back. Sam Coulter has come back to claim you."

"But, Mr. Frazee——" began Sarepta.

"Frazee is my true and legal name. Adam Coulter only brought me up. I have come back to claim you. Will you have me, after all?"

She reached her arms around his neck and kissed him.

"Well—er—er," Mr. Longenecker began, wiping his glasses and then his eyes. "Brother Frazee, I would suggest that if you—er—had a license now we might—er—go ahead, as it were."

Frazee fumbled in the pocket of the overcoat.

"Here are the proofs that I was born Frazee. Here's my honorable discharge from the army. Here is a certificate from the *jefe politico* of San Rafael, province of Coban, Guatemala, that I am still a bachelor—that's why I was so long away—and, ah yes, here it is—here is a license from the county clerk of Logan County——"

"Sister Pettitt, will you stand over there? And Brother Pettitt, you stand right here."

"What! Get married right now?" cried Sarepta, scrambling to her feet. "Why, we'll have to wait till I can get my wedding things ready!"

"Not a minute longer, deary," said Frazee, taking her hand. "It is Indian summer with us. We have waited too long already."

FOR BOOK LOVERS

MR. JOHN BARRY'S "A Daughter of Thespis," brought out by Page & Co., of Boston, is one of the remarkable books. The author takes a group of somewhat commonplace stage people—without even one famous star disguised under an inverted name.

He tells his story which in no way pictures the torrid life of the stage and its people as we so often read of it. There are no black silk sheets, or caviare and champagne breakfasts for the leading lady, and you feel cheated somehow of the naughtiness that ought to go with a stage story.

When you are half through the book you suddenly realize that this is a record of life as it is—rather than as it is put together by the bookwright, usually aiming to please his reader, if not with his story, then with his style.

Mr. Barry disdains to idealize, and is too honest even to word-paint. His people go on for pages with the usual banalities of ordinary conversation, and conversation is so much more ordinary than we realize! When the light breaks over the reader of the Barry book, you feel the grinding monotony with which the wheels of life go around, just as you do in reading George Moore's books.

We who have so much of romance served to us in books and plays, do not readily grasp the fact that life's tragedies and comedies, its climaxes and crises, that playwrights and book builders make so impressive and picturesque, in reality are lived through in very much of a routine.

It's all in the day's work, and we love and we hate, we work and we play, we wake and we sleep, in a monotone. There is birth and death, marriage and

divorce, but the commonplace dominates those of us who live normal lives.

Those who fondly imagine that, by letting their hair grow and living without bath tubs, they are soaring above the conventional, are always the most commonplace of all. The most wonderful thing about modern life is this manner in which we go on living through beautiful things and horrible things with apparent unconsciousness.

The telephone bell summons us to confab with the undertaker as to the details of the putting under of our best beloved, and Central cuts us off with a thud. The cook announces dinner when we have just parted from the man or the woman whose existence has made life possible to us.

We neither throw up our hands and scream aloud in agony, nor do we sit down to chuckle over the burlesque that runs so clearly through the woof of life. Only dreamers and poets live on the heights with star-poised eyes, and those that are most intelligent strive to conceal the exaltation of their mental attitude toward things. They are never quite in the world, these persons that write books and plays and endow the characters that they think they are drawing from life with their own special feelings and emotions as they would feel them under similar circumstances.

The average human being with feet firmly planted on the ground is apt to feel quite differently or not at all. Mr. Barry seems to realize this, and writes honestly without allowing himself the pleasure which a writer feels in endearing a character, even an unworthy one, to a reader.

The stage, a theme with which the author is perhaps too familiar and as to which he has evidently lost his illu-

sions, hold his pen in this book. He seems to understand and undervalue his characters. With a story which might enthrall his own interest and call on his powers of idealization this tremendous honesty of style should prove marvelously original.



Irving Bacheller knows boys as well as he does forests. His boys are the sort that grow up far from cities and learn early in their lives to hew wood and fell timber, rather than play with tops and marbles.

"Darrel of the Blessed Isles," published by the Lothrop Company, of Boston, makes us know one of these men-boys, more ingenuous in his ways than most girls. There is a little love scene between the boy, Trove, and Polly, which is a woodland idyll.

Trove develops to the estate of a district school teacher, with a class of untamed country cubs to conquer. He has a joust with two of them in the class, and they feel his physical strength as well as his mental power over them.

Trove improves in his love-making and marries his boyhood's love. Darrel, the character for whom the book is named, is a true Bacheller study. There is the ring of the ax in the forest sounding through this author's English; it is so clear, so true, sure and free from literary affectations.



Hichen's "Felix," a Stokes book, gives us quite another sort of boy. He is a boy of temperament, eager to live his life, and he learns his Balzac too early and too well, making his mental attitude morbidly introspective. He glorifies even his cheapest emotions with a magnificently youthful egotism.

There are two of those abnormal women that Hichens delights to dissect with psychic saws and scalpels. His feminine types always suggest Beardsley's poster women, flaunting their perverted sensuality, yet apparently unconscious of it. There is more than a hint through the pages of this morbidly delightful volume that the women of

the London drawing-rooms are faddy on the subject of morphine.

The two dames in the book not only drug themselves, but a pet dog, which Felix steals and cures. But the married woman that he falls in love with, dies, and we know then that the eccentricity of high-necked, long-sleeved bodices had a reason. She was tattooed, every inch of her, with a hypodermic needle, which, when she grew careless, toward the last, she failed to remove when she had secured its result.

Not a cheerful book, but a fascinating study of the mental, physical and psychic trinity that go to make up the rag and the bone and the hank of hair that we call a woman.



Enthralling in interest are two studies in criminology, that bring us close to the underworld. One is Hapgood's "Autobiography of a Thief," published by Fox, Duffield and Company, and the other is Josiah Flynt's "The Rise of Roderick Clowd," Dodd, Mead and Company.

In these true tales, with their vagabond heroes, we get an inner view of the mental make-up of those who live by preying upon their kind. We learn that viciousness is not necessarily a part of the thief's character, and that when the burglar isn't burgling he has his sentiments, and, above all, a pride in the standing which he holds among his fellows in crime.

Stealing is a business to the thief, and he begins in the lower grades and mounts steadily, if he be clever, until he wins riches and reputation among his brother crooks.

His terms in jail are not, to the criminal, the dreary experiences that they seem to those who manage to keep on the right side of prison bars. The thief is lacking in æstheticism, as in moral sense, and he takes his jailing more as an annoying cessation of activity in his busy career than as a disgraceful punishment before all men.

Clowd is a high-class criminal, whose services are in demand by the gangs that operate large deals—bank robber-

ies that take years in their planning and cost thousands of dollars in their putting through. Hapgood's hero is more ordinary, of a literary turn, given to philosophy and cheap epigram. He is not so picturesque nor so dashing as Roderick Clowd. But, then, Clowd comes honestly by his criminality; the germ is in his blood. The other man drifts into the profession, and takes no artistic pride in his achievements.

The thieves' slang with which both books abound is expressive and grimly humorous in its application. The final reformation of the men and their long-winded perorations on the folly of dishonest living are also humorous, in view of the fact that neither faltered in his career of crime until he was too ill and worn out even to pick a pocket, which is the kindergarten practice of the thief.



"The House on the Hudson," announced by its publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons, as the first work of a new writer, Frances Powell, is one of the book surprises of the season. It is cleverly written, and after enchaining the interest in its heroine, Athena, a remarkably fascinating character, it develops into an unconventional love story.

A book like this is a grateful gift in these days of imitative literature, and those who like a tale that holds the interest from first to last will enjoy this record of an unusual girl's life—with much mystery woven in as a pleasant defiance to those who deny our modern rights in romance.



The MacMillan Company publishes "People of the Whirlpool," the author anonymous, but a woman. The title is a translation of the Indian tribe name, "Mon-ah-tons," which we know better as Manhattans.

"Elizabeth in Her Garden" seems to have been the keynote for the tune in time to which this author has penned her story. New York's picturesque but poorly appreciated beauties are described as seen by eyes which have never failed to note the glory of the

city's electric crown at night, the majesty of the harbor, the poetry in the dark old corners of the town and the craggy grandeur of the subway excavations.

Otherwise the book drags like a lazy day. These People of the Whirlpool know only one side of their New York, and none of its nerve prostrations or the hurries and worries which it calls its amusements.



Holman Day's "Maine Ballads" are songs from the fishing banks and the lumber forests, as strong in vigor and sweep as the dash of green salt wave or the swing of a woodman's ax.

There is humor, too, of the quaint sort that appeals to those tired of smart writing and the *effete* in verse. A rattling poem tells of the adventures of the man who draws a year's pay, goes down the river on a load of logs and burns up every place he touches with the enthusiasm of his spree.

When his last cent is gone he is shipped home by freight, and starts in for another year's work, declaring with much satisfaction that he never had such a good time before. But, then, "When O'Connor Drew His Pay" is only one of these great sea and forest songs. There are others, in which you can get the swat of the sou'wester and feel the salt breeze on your face.



"The Better Sort," by Henry James, which the Scribners publish, is a collection of short stories challenging the intelligence and the perception in their every line. The tales are told in, as James would call it, the "intenser Chipendale manner."

No merely vulgar distinctness mars one of the narratives. There is a beautiful, vapory, intellectual mist hanging about them, through which one gets occasional glimpses of the author's thought—his real thought, which his words in many cases effectually conceal.

An author who dares to put the commonplaces of everyday life into the conversation of his characters is very apt to be rated as deadly dull. Henry

James, by some mystic art, invests the most ordinary ejaculation with wonderful meaning. The "I dare say" of the dinner man and woman is certainly tawdry talk, but James makes it eloquent with subtle repression.

"The Beldonald Holbein," one of the stories, is a charming study of woman's vanity brought to bay. "Broken Wings," the equally delightful analysis of a literary love affair, scintillates with dull glints of wit and emotional intensity. The lady in the case has a voiceless litany to her well beloved.

"You—wonderful You!" she would croon mentally, when he told her things, and "You—beautiful You!" was her inner murmur when her artist lover told her that he hadn't sold a picture in three years. This little dissective study is an admirable exposition of the bluff in art.

Life's "Rhymes and Roundelays" is a charming piazza book in a smart olive leather cover with gold lettering. There are butterfly verses by the younger poets who make classy rhymes, and there are a number of women among the verse makers.

Marian E. Stockton, the wife of the late Frank R. Stockton, writes an interesting memorial sketch of her husband as a preface to his posthumous book, "The Captain's Tollgate," published by Appleton.

The story is written with all of the Stockton sweetness and humor that made this author so much loved by his readers. But the preface is an interesting document to those who recognized in this author the imagination, humor and gentle philosophy that gave him first claim to greatness among American writers of fiction.

This sketch gives a most intimate record of a wonderfully busy, absorbed life and a nature teeming with kindness, the qualities of head and heart balancing with an evenness not usually found in the personality of the genius.

Stockton's mind was a marvel, not only of imagination and humor, but of

mechanical constructiveness. All the odd machines that were exploited in his famous novels were planned strictly on scientific principles, and each of them was possible to such an extent that several of them have since been constructed by scientists.

His characters were nearly all taken from life and made interesting by the exaggeration of their quaint peculiarities. The sequels to the best known of the Stockton stories were written to satisfy the demands of the readers who wished to follow the careers of Pomona, the Dusantes and others.



The MacMillan Company is sponsor for a series of "Little Novels by Favorite Authors," small, flat books that one can slip in a grip or even a coat pocket. There is "Mrs. Pendleton's Four-in-Hand," by Gertrude Atherton; "Philosophy Four," by Owen Wister; "Mr. Keegan's Elopement," by Winston Churchill, and "Man Overboard," by F. Marion Crawford.

Each book is well illustrated, and has a front picture of its author. Each is an excellent example of its writer's style, and is of the fluffy sort of reading that accords with summer moods.

Type, cover, everything about these little books, makes them attractive to the reader who does not like the ponderous between book covers.



Books of short stories seem to be epidemic with the Scribners, who offer another excellent bunch of hard-luck tales by F. Hopkinson Smith, who calls his book "The Under Dog," and explains it thus:

"In the strife of life some men lose place through physical weakness or lost opportunities or impaired abilities; struggle on as they may, they must always be the Under Dog in the fight. These Under Dogs have always appealed to me. Their stories are printed here in the hope that they may also appeal to you."

The heroes of these—the Under Dogs

—are all from among life's failures. Mr. Smith makes them more interesting and picturesque than such men usually are.

He paints them with an artist's brush and pen, and if you, like him, are fond of the Under Dogs, who are, we think, accorded more sympathy than they deserve, you will like to read of life's seamiest side and the people who sink at the sight of a policeman, even when they are clad in purple, fine linen and opera hats.



Sewell Ford's "Horses Nine" is one of the Scribner output, and tells the story of the horse—the fire horse, the truck horse, the circus horse, bred on a farm but announced on billboards as an "Arabian steed," and other interesting animals.

Mr. Ford does not make his horses talk, but he makes them think and endows them with high-bred feelings and emotions too fine to be described as human. Some of their careers are checked, but they bear it all patiently and have a change of luck, most of them for an ending.

The mounted policeman's steed, "Skipper," who wins a blue ribbon at the show, but afterward gets a spavined leg and is auctioned off for thirty-five dollars, has a career filled with varied experiences. He has a fad, after his fall, for running away, and this wins him no favor from his new owners, apple peddlers, grocers, and, finally, an old junk man, who drives him to a wagon with jangling bells.

One day Skipper slips out of the shanty that serves him as a stable, and out on Riverside Drive he takes his stand in style, just as he used when he was the pride of the mounted squad.

"Few people were passing, and none seemed to notice him. His coat was shaggy and weather-stained. It looked patched and faded. The spavined hock caused one hindquarter to sag somewhat, but, aside from that, his pose was strictly according to the regulations.

"Skipper had been playing at standing post for half an hour, when a trotting dandy who sported ankle boots and toe-weights, pulled up before him. He was drawing a light, bicycle-wheeled road wagon in which were two men."

"'Queer?' one of the men was saying. 'Can't say I see anything queer about it, Captain. Some old plug, that's got away from a squatter; that's all I see in it.'"

"'Well, let's have a look,' said the other. He stared hard at Skipper for a moment, and then, in a loud, sharp tone, said:

"'Ten-shun! Right dress!'

"Skipper pricked up his ears, raised his head and side-stepped, stiffly. The trotting dandy turned and looked curiously at him.

"'Forward!' said the man in the wagon. Skipper hobbled out in the road.

"'Right wheel! Halt! I thought so,' said the man, as Skipper obeyed orders. 'That fellow has been on the force. He was standing post.'"

Skipper's little play wins him back an oak paneled box-stall with stained glass windows and a porcelain feed box, and he has his name on a brass plate on the door of his stable.

His old master has become an alderman and has grown rich through an inheritance. He takes back Skipper and hires a high-priced veterinary, who cures the spavin, and the bad days are over for the game old horse.



"The Black Lion Inn," by Alfred Henry Lewis, R. H. Russell, publisher, is a collection of Western stories told in the winter time around a tavern fire. The book is illustrated with Indian heads in Remington's familiar style, which accords well with the author's uncurried fashion of story-telling.

Lewis' style is like nothing more than one of Remington's bucking broncos, and those that like that sort of thing, as opposed to manicured literature, will enjoy these ripping tales.